





THE
COMMENTARIES
of M. IOHN CALVIN
*upon the Actes of the
Apostles,*

Faithfully translated out of
Latine into English for the
great profite of our coun-
trie-men,

By Christopher Fetherstone
Student in Divinitie.



LONDINI,
Impensis G. Bishop.

1585.





To the right Honorable the Lorde
Henrie, *Earle of Huntington*, Lord
Hastings, &c. Knight of the most honorable order of
the Garter, and Lord President of the Queenes Maiesties
Counsell established in the North partes:

Christopher Fetherstone wisheth increafe of
spirituall gifts, long life, and happie daies.



F that (right Honorable) I
shoulde prefixe anie long and
tedious Preface before this
woorke in commendation of
your Honor, I should of some
be suspected of flatterie: If in
praise of these learned Com-
mentaries, it shoulde seeme a
thing superfluous, seeing they
sufficiently commend them-

selues: If in excuse of those faultes whiche are by mee in
translating hereof committed: some censuring *Cato* would
condemne mee, because I would take in hand a worke so
weightie, being not able to be without fault, and by cra-
uing pardon for faultes, lay open my follie. Omitting
therefore these thinges which might carrie with them such
inconueniences, I hasten vnto that whereof I am chieflie
to speake: namely to lay open the causes mouing mee to
dedicate this my simple translation vnto your Honor.
Your deserts of Gods church, your singular zeale, your
vnsained faith, your syncere profelsion, your especiall
care to aduance Gods glory, and to roote out papistrie,
your faithfulnessse towards your Prince haue been suche,
that this Realme generally, but my councitriemen in the
North parts, my natie soyle specially, haue & shall haue

The Epistle

great cause to prayse God for you in the day of their visitation,euē when it shall please God of his great mercie to behold them with fauourable countenance, and to take from them in greater measure that blindness and superstition, wherein they had been long time nouſled, and being fast bred by the bone, is not yet (through want of meanes) gotten out of the flesh. Seeing all these vertues are in you to be found: seeing both this church and countrie haue found you so beneficiall, whom ought not these things to prouoke to shew all thankfulness toward your honor? Againe, when this historie of the Acts of the Apostles was first penned in Greeke by Luke, it was dedicated to noble Theophilus: When M. Calvin did the second time publish his Commentaries thereupon in Latine, he presented them vnto one who was in minde a noble Theophilus. Least therefore this worke nowe published in English, should by dedication bee any whit debased, I haue made choyse of your honour, being no lesse a noble Theophilus than those before mentioned. Another thing which is not so much a cause as an encouragement, is that courtesie which your honor sheweth to those, which present vnto you any exercises of learning howe simple soeuer they bee; whereof I haue had full good experience, euē in my tender yeeres: namely, at such time as I was trained vp in the citie of Carlile, vnder that man in his calling painfull, and to the common-wealth profitable, M. *Hayes*, whom for that dutie which to him I owe, I name. At which time though those exercises which vnto your honour wee then presented were simple, yet were they so courtcously of you receiued, that the remembrance thereof doth euē nowe encourage mee to presume to offer vnto you some weightier matter. The last, but not the least, is, the consideration of that great & vnderferued kindnesse, which all my friendes in generall, but especially, my brother your Honors seruant, haue found at your hands, which to rip vp at large, would bee too tedious. In their behalf therefore (right Honorable) as
also

Dedicatorie.

also in mine owne, as a small testimonie of a thankfull heart, I present vnto your honour this worke; simple, if you respect the translation, but moste excellent if you consider the matter. And thus humbly crauing pardon for my boldnesse, and much more humbly beseeching the Lorde to blesse you in the reading heereof, I conclude, fearing prolixitie. The Lord of heauen blesse you, and graunt that as you haue been heerebefore a good Theophilus, so you may continue to the glorie of God, the increasing of his church, and the profite of this common wealth. From Maighfield in Suffex this 12. of October. 1585.

Your Honors most humble and obedient,
and in Christe at commandement,
Christopher Fetherstone.

A3 The

The Epistle to the

Reader.



Thou hast at length (Christian Reader) through the blessing of God wherewith he hath blessed my labours, those learned Commentaries of M. Calvin upon the Acts of the Apostles, though simple, yet faithfully turned into English: & though of manie. I was the unmeetest to attempt this travell; yet such was the earnest request of my godlie friends, that unlesse I should haue taken it in hand, I should haue seemed voide of courtesie, and also of care to profite God his Church. I will not stand to rip up those commodities, which thou by reading these Commentaries maiest reape, but I leaue them to thine own experience. What my travell hath been in this worke, those who haue indured like toile, can best iudge. And forasmuch as I know well that after great paines taken, some things haue escaped me, I beseech thee (gentle reader) condemne me not rashly, but rather amend them friendlie. If thou shalt growe forward in knowledge by reading this worke, then praise God, who hath by this meanes made thee profite. God giue thee good successe in reading, that thereby thou mayest both bee better learned and also better liued.

Thine in the Lorde,
Christopher Fetherstone.

To

To the most renowned Prince the
L. Nicolas Radzimill, duke in Olika,
 Countie Palatine of Vilna, chiefe Marshall, and head
Chauncellar of the great Dukedome Lethuania,
whoe his Lord highly to be revered, Iohn Caluin.



Heras I haue made mention of the names of those kings vnto whom I had dedicated these my Commentaries: least the change incurre the crime of lightnesse among certaine vnskilfull men, I must brieflie render some reason thereof. For although both the remembrance of the father who is dead, doth retaine that reuerence with mee which it deserueth; and I doe also as becommeth mee reuerence the sonne: yet the importunatenes of certaine did inforce me to put out their names in this second edition, who being incensed against me with a furious hatred and feare, least the maiestie of kings doe purchase some fauor to my writings, do boast abroad that they did conceiue sore displeasure, that their name was mixed with the doctrine of the sacraments which they them selues disallow. I leaue it indifferent whether that be true or no, neither doe I passe: forasmuch as I did neither hunt after anie priuate gaine, ne yet seeke to win fauor. But because it seemed to me an vn decent and filthie thing, to enforce those bookes vpon men which are, vnwilling to entertaine them, which doe find willing readers inough, it was worth the declaring now, that I neuer did think any thing lesse: but that I did hope for more courtesie than I found. In that trulie there can be no offence, if withdrawing my selfe from the contempt of those who loath my dutifulnesse, I suffer them to enioy those delights of theirs which they desire, and wherein they delight. Of you (most famous prince) haue I made choise not without good cause, whom I might put in the place of two: both because I thinke you most worthie, to haue your name appeare in the spirituall building of Christes temple: neither doe I feare but that my booke shall finde the same friendship at your handes, which you did vouchsafe to declare towards mee in your most gentle letters. But omitting at this time the respect of priuate good will, I will stay in another thing. Moreouer I may full well applie vnto you that speech which I had before with another. Neither am I determined in this place to commend those most excellent vertues wherewith you haue purchased great authoritie & singular fauor with the king of Polonia: I am rather bent vnto an exhortation, the summe wherof shall be this, that with the like readines & ioifulnes wherewith you haue at the beginning receiued the pure doctrine of the Gospell, that with the like stoutnes of courage wherewith you haue hitherto indeuored to maintain the true worship of God, you do with the same cōstancie prosecute this course vnto the end. It was surely a point of rare vertue, that wheras you did know that many did hate nothing more then, than the frank profess

gion and free studie of godlines, yet so soone as the truth of the Gospell
 of Christe did once shine and appeare vnto you, you did not feare by gi-
 uing your name to prouoke their hatred against you. Neither doe those
 offices and good turnes deserue small prayse, which you did not cease
 to bestow vpon the cherishing and increasing of the first beginnings of
 the Church: although this your diligence did purchase vnto you great
 enuie amongst manie noble men, which did not allowe the same. But
 because you haue no lesse harde straites to passe through, you must of-
 tentimes stirre vp and encourage your selfe to ouercome them all, vntill
 you haue finished the last act: And so much the more carefully, because
 manie princes, although they see the estate of the Church filthily cor-
 rupt, yet dare they attempt no remedie: because that daunger which
 they feare will proceede from innouation, when euilles must bee driuen
 out of their olde and quiet possession, doth hinder and keepe them back
 from doing their dutie. Other some thinke it to be an absurde and foo-
 lish thing, to touch or set hande to diseases which are vncurable. Other
 some (I cannot tell through what frowardnesse) doe flie from and ab-
 horre all manner of reformation. But to intreate of those lets where-
 with you are enuironned on euerie side, it were superfluous, especiallie
 seeing you knowe them well enough: Yet howloeuver Sathan doeth as-
 fault you, and with what combats soeuer he doth exercise you, you can
 not without great wickednesse bee wearie of this holy warfare, which
 you haue professed vnder Christe his banner. Furthermore, although
 you bee forward enough of your selfe: yet I hope it will neither bee
 troublesome, neither yet vnprofitable for you to haue your prosperous
 course of your earnest studie, holpen and furthered with this help which
 God doeth offer vnto your handes by mee. So often as wee see thinges
 tossed to and fro, and as it were turned topsie turuie in the world, there
 can no more fit and sure proppe bee found to establishe and stay our
 weake consciences, than when as setting before our eyes the kingdome
 of Christe, as it doth now appeare, wee consider what hath been the
 estate and condition of the same from the beginning. When we speake
 of the kingdome of Christ, wee must respect two thinges: the doctrine
 of the Gospell, wherby Christ doth gather vnto himselfe a church, and
 whereby he gouerneth the same, beeing gathered together: Secondly,
 the societie of the godly, who beeing coupled together by the sincere
 faith of the gospel, are truly accounted the people of God. Both which
 things howe liuely they are expessed by Luke in the Actes of the Apo-
 stles, it is better to knowe by the reading of the whole book, than to be-
 leeuie either my commendation or the commendation of anie man
 els. For although the sonne of GOD hath alwayes reigned, euen
 from the first beginning of the worlde: yet after that beeing reuca-
 led in the fleshe, hee published his Gospell, hee beganne then to e-
 rect a more famous Tribunall seate than before, whence hee doeth
 now appeare most plainly and to be also most glorious. If we turne our
 eies hither, they shalbe fedde, not with a vaine picture (as *Virgil* saith of
 his *Aeneas*) but with the sound knowledge of those things from which we
 must

must fetch life. And to the end I may returne vnto that whereof I determined to speak; this is the best refuge for the conscience of men, where they may quietly rest amidst these troublesome tempests, wherewith the world is shaken. Finally, this meditation alone shall bring to passe, that that shall neuer befall vs, which too too many experiments do proue to haueben truly spoken by *Ennius* in times past of the more part of men, that *wisdom*e is driuen away so often as the matter is handled by violence. For if in the greatest and most vehement heat of combats, the sweete harmonic of instruments was of such force amongst the Lacedemonians; that it did aswage that furiousnes and fearcenes which was ingendred in that warlike people, and did temper that violence, which doth then out of measure rage in those natures, which are otherwise vnpatient: how much more shall the kingdome of Christ do this, by the heauenlie pleasant tune of the holy Ghost, which doth not onely tame most cruel beastes, but maketh also Lambes of Wolues, Lyons, and Beares; which turneth speares into hooke, and swords into ploughshares? Therefore seeing that (most noble Prince) I offer vnto you such kinde of temperature as the necessitie of times requireth; I hope that this duetie of mine shall not be vnwelcome to your highnes: so that indeede you shall perceiue this kind of confirmation to be very profitable & fit, to looke into the beginning of the Church, as it is described of Luke, wherein appeareth both wonderfull power of God vnder the reproch of the crosse; and also most valiant patience of the seruants of God, vnder the huge burden of troubles, and the successe it selfe vncredible to the iudgement of the worlde; bringeth forth most plentiful fruite of both. But that I may omit other things which you had better set out by reading of Luke himselfe, I will touch one thing which is proper to earthly princes, and the chiefe gouernours of kingdomes and countries: To wit, that seeing that (the power of the whole world gainesaying, and al men which were then in authoritie being armed to oppresse the Gospel) a few men, obscure, vnarmed and contemptible, trusting onely to the aid of the truth & the spirit, did labor so stoutly in spreading abroad the faith of Christ, did refuse no paines nor danger, did stand stoutly against all assaults, vn-rill at length they gat the victorie: there remaineth no excuse for Christian nobles, who are of any dignitie, seeing God hath furnished them with the sword to defend the kingdome of his sonne, vnlesse they bee at least as constant and bold to take vpon them such an honorable office. Furthermore, it is not my part to declare how faithfully and vprightlie I haue behaued myselfe in interpreting this historie. I hope surely my labour shall be fruitfull to all men. And as for you (most wortheie prince) I must againe request and beseech you, that you doe both priuately addict your selfe wholly vnto Christ his gouernement, as you haue of late happily begun: and that you woulde also become not onely a faithfull helper, but also a most stout & valiant standerbearer in furthering the kingdome of Christ, vnto so manie noble men, whom not onely the renowne of their stocke and linage, but also the excellencie of their vertues doth commend. God hath vouchsafed to bestowe vpon the realme

of Polonia a singular priuiledge of honor, that the better part of the nobility bidding adue to wicked superstitions, which are as many corruptions and pollutions of the worship of God, should desire with one consent a true forme of godlines, and a well framed and reformed order of the Church. It is well knowne that these men were not a little aided by your authoritie. But there remaine more cumbats both for you, and also for them; than that like ouerworne souldiers, you should giue your selues to idlenesse and rest. First, although no forraigne enemy trouble you, you shall haue busines enough to withstande those euils which are at home with you. You haue sufficiently tried with how many sleights Sathan is furnished, that he may worke some poillie to ouerthrow that holy concorde amongst brethren, wherein consisteth the safetie of the Church. That befallerth you which is common euerie where, for troublesome men to thrust in themselves when things are out of order: who whilest they see a few, and those weaklings troubled by a great multitude, and that they do with much adoe defend the trueth, which is couered with the thicke clouds of false accusations, they doe more easilie come vpon them vnawares. And by this subtiltie doeth that chiefe worker of all disceite and guile, seeke the ruine of the Church, not onely by cutting, mangling, and pulling in pieces the vnitie of the faith, but by burdening the name of Christ with false enuie: because the companies of the godly amongst whom these wicked knaues mixe themselves, seeme to bee certaine receptacles and sinkes of all filthinesse. So whilest that *Stancharus*, a man of a troublesome nature, dorth through that ambition wherewith hee is wholelie set on fire, spread abroad amongst you his dotings, hereupon brake out that contention which threatneth some scattering abroad: and you were laide open vnto the slaunders of many, because it was thought that his sect did spreade it selfe farther. Beholde on the other side a certaine Phisition called *George Brandata* worse than *Stancharus*, because his errour is more detestable, and because hee hath in his minde more secrete poison. For which cause these also are the more worthie to be reprobued, at whose hands the vngodlinesse of *Seruius* hath found such fauour of such a suddaine. For although I am perswaded, that they are farre from those peruerse and sacriligious opinions: yet they should haue taken better heede and not haue suffered this foxe craftilie to creepe into their companie, because such plagues wil neuer be wanting; neither will Sathan euer cease to bring abroad into the forefront such champions as haue giuen ouer themselves to serue him, that hee may trouble the beginninges of the Gospel, it is for you to bee continually in a redinesse: and to the ende you may preuent greater euils, you must set downe a right and godly manner of gouernment, which is the faithfull keeping of holie peace. For as it is manifest that puritie of doctrine is the soule of the Church: so wee may full well compare Discipline vnto the Sinowes, wherewith the bodie being bounde and knitte togither doth maintaine his strength. Now on the other side the vngodlinesse of other enemies ought to sharpen your studdie and earnestnesse, I meane the preachers of Antichrist of Rome, who to the end they may

disceiue

disceiue the ignorant doe continually with shrill voice sounde out the name of the Church. There is no controuerſie amongst vs about the Church, but all graunt that the authoritie thereof ought to bee reuerenced of all the children of God: ſaue onely that they vnder falſe colour of honor do make the ſhadowiſh name of the Church, ſubiect to their luſtes: we do ſo reuerence the Church from our heart, that we account it great wickedneſſe to prophane the ſacred name thereof. That I may omitte other godlie miniſters of pure and ſound doctrine, I my ſelfe haue againe and againe heretofore in manie places handled this queſtion: when mention is made of the Church, whoſe heade is the ſonne of God: and which he, who is the fountaine of life eternall, doth alwayes quicken by his ſpirit: how ridiculous a thing it is to bring forth a bodie without an heade, and ſecondly a deade carkaffe. The hireling flatterers of the Pope, doe crie out that they haue the Church. But we can knowe by no meanes better, whether this be true or no, than when wee looke vnto the heade. As for that, it is manifeſt, that it is cut off by their ſacrilegious violence. For how ſhall Chriſt retain the place of the heade, being diſpoiled of all his power, throwne downe from his gouernment, deprived of his dignitie? Vpon this condition hath the heauenlie father made him the heade of the Church, that he may gouerne all men from the greateſt to the leaſt, by the doctrine of his Goſpel: that hee may bee the onely prieſt, to reconcile the father continually, as hee hath once appeaſed his wrath by the ſacrifice of his death: that his death may continually purge our ſinnes: that his blood may be the only waſhing: that his obedience may be a perfect ſatisfaction: that hee may be a continuall and ſole interceſſour, through whoſe meanes our prayers may be hearde: that hee may be a faithfull defendour and tutour, that hee may by his aide defende vs: that (the vices of our fleſhe beeing tamed) hee may reſourme vs vnto righteouſneſſe and holineſſe: that hee alone may beginne and finiſh in vs a bleſſed life. If the Papiſtes haue leſt him any of theſe thinges, let them haue the Church on their ſide. But if the Pope oppreſſing mens conſciences with his ſearce and more than cruell tyrannie, haue diſannulled and taken awaie Chriſt his gouernement: if hee haue brought in a forme of gouernement, altogether contrarie to the doctrine of the Goſpel: if hee haue inuented a newe and ſtraunge prieſthood, that hee may thruſt in himſelfe being but a mortall man, to bee the mediator betweene GOD and the worlde: if hee haue forged daylie Sacrifices, that hee maie put them in Chriſtes place: if hee haue inuented a thouſande ſatisfactions for ſinnes: if hee haue brought fained waſhings from the lake of hell, to make drie the bloode of the ſonne of God: if hee haue put in his place infinite patrons: if he haue torne in a thouſande peeces that righteouſneſſe which muſt bee ſer whollie from him: if in ſteed of the holie Ghoſt he haue erected mans freewill: it is without all queſtion, that the true Chriſt is baniſhed farre from papiſtrie. For this cauſe haue I ſaide that the Papiſtes make boalt of a deade carkaffe in ſteed of the liuelie bodie of Chriſt,
because

because though they haue extinguished the Doctrine of the Gospel (which is the true soule of the Church, & which duly doth quicken the same) yet they do greatly boast of a shadowish & trifling kind of church. Wee make it full well knowne howe corrupt the puritie of doctrine is amongst them, yea with what monstrous errors it is polluted. They doe not onely couer all their corruptions vnder the shadow of the Church: but also complaine that we doe great iniurie to the Church, because we say that the same doeth erre. But they shoulde first haue examined the doctrine, that the Church might thereby be knowne. These iust and honest iudges wil haue the feigned title of doctrine to haue sufficient force of preiudice to couer and suppress the difference, and that not to discieue men. For with what sleights and leigerdemaine would they assaie to bleare euen daseling eies in so great light? But because they accompt this libertie of lying a part of their tyrannie, they thinke they reigne not as they woulde, valesse they reprochfully mocke miserable soules. That wee may set an example no farther, wee haue seene in our times, sometime the Tridentine Fathers, sometimes the Fathers of Bononia, who although they were euen at daggers drawing among themselves, yet did they some out their vaine Canons on both sides. And surely if men assent to their principles, the triumph shall be prepared on both sides. There sit there I cannot tell how manie Bishops, and Abbats peraduenture an hundred horned beastes. If the most fine flower of all the nation should shine there, yet should it be nothing else but a wicked conspiracie against God. And nowe after that the Pope hath gathered together the branne and chips of his vncleane and filthy rotten flocke, shall the representatiue Church suddainly appeare there? And are they not yet ashamed to cal that, an holy, general, and lawful Councel which doth not deserue so much, as to be called a vaine and Comickall visure of a Councel? But as for vs to whom the promise is made, that Antichrist, who sitteth in the temple of God, shall be destroyed with the breath of the Lords mouth: let not vs (I say) cease to refute this filthie and whorish impudencie, with that most sacred worde, which they so boldlie mocke: that al men may see what difference there is betweene the chaste spouse of Christ, and the stinking whore of Beliall: betweene the sanctuarie of God, and the Brothelhouse of Satan: betweene the spirituall house of the godly, and the stie of hogges: and finallie betweene the true Church, and the court of Rome. There can no more certaine or plaine demonstration be brought concerning this matter either by *Euclide*, either yet by *Archimedes*, then if the Church, as Luke describeth it, be compared with the popish Synagogue. Neither am I so streit, that I would haue that confused lump, being altogither repugnant vnto the order of nature, and manner of humanitie, to be agreeable in al points to the rule of the Apostles, which is Angelicall and heauenlie. If they can shew any thing wherein they are like vnto them; they may triumph for me. But for as much as all things are contrarie, & although the more part of men become blind willingly (at leastwise seeing the whole heauens doe allow vs) we may not onely contemne their brainesicke pride with-

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without any feare, but also freely speake euill of the same. In the meane season we haue no small consolation to support vs: that howsoeuer the Papists doe set against vs with sterne countenance, the name and title of the Church, yet we know that we fight onely against the professed enemies of Christ. We ought aboue all thinges to desire, that the most renowned king, who according to his wisdom hath long agoe spied out the subtile sleights of the Romish court, commanding those vain Bells to auoide, wherein the Councel boasteth a farr off, may at length more free lie applie his minde vnto the earnest and perfect restoring of the Church. Yet ought no lingering to keepe you back, but euery one of you must with might and maine indeuour to enlarge and spreade abroad those beginnings which are begun to arise so happilie.

Farewell most excellent Lord, and right renowned Prince: The Lord alwaies gouerne you with his spirite, amplifie by all meanes your dignitie: and blesse your godlie enterprises euen vnto the ende.

At Geneva, the first of
August, 1560.



The argument vpon the Actes of the Apostles.



O the intent that all godly men may with more diligence reade this historie, and also be more desirous thereof: it shall not be without profite, briefly to note what commoditie they shall reape thereby. This is the chiefeſt praise that a prophane historie hath, namely, that it is the maiſtes of life. If that narration of famous deeds which onely teacheth men what they ought to followe, or what they ought to eschewe in their common actions, deserue such a title: of how great praise are the diuine histories worthie, which do not onely frame the outward life of man that he may winne praise by verue; but also (which is more) which declare vnto vs, that God from the beginning hath had a speciall regard alwayes of his Church, and faithfull congregation: that he hath bene alwayes a most iust reuenger of all wrongs done vnto those, that haue betaken themselues vnto his tuition, and haue committed themselues vnto his custodie: that he hath shewed himselfe fauourable and mercifull vnto most miserable and wretched sinners: and lastly by teaching vs faith, hoised vs high aboute the heauens? I say nothing of this, that they do euerie where set forth the providence of God, that they distinguish the true worship of God from the false, they neuer erre in the difference of vice and verue. Although I omit nowe also those worthe praises which vse most commonly to be attributed vnto the sacred histories, intending onely shortly to touch those, which are proper to this booke, which wee haue taken in hande. Those things which Luke setteth before vs in this place to be learned, are not only great, but also of rare profite: For first in that he sheweth that the spirite of God was sent vnto the Apostles, he doth not only proue that Christ was faithfull & true in keeping his promise, made vnto his Apostles: but also he certifieth vs, that he is alwayes mindfull of his, and a perpetuall gouernour of his Church: because the holy spirite did discende from heauen to this ende, whereby we learne that the distance of place doeth no whit hinder Christ from being present with those that be his, at all times. Nowe heere is most liuely painted out, the beginning of Christs kingdome, and as it were the reuening of the worlde. For although the sonne of God had gathered together by his preaching, a certaine Church, before such time as he departed out of the world: yet neuerthelesse, that was the best forme of the Church which began then, when as the Apostles hauing new power giuen them from aboue, began to preach, that that onely sheapherd did both die and also rise againe, that through his conduct all those which were disperſed farre and wide, vpon the face of the whole earth, might bee gathered vnto one sheepeſolde. Heere is therefore set downe both the beginning, and also the increaſing of the Church of Christ, after his ascension, whereby he was declared to be king both of heauen and earth. Furthermore therein appeareth as well the merueilous power of Christ, as the great force and efficacie of the Gospell it selfe: for in that Christ by a sort of simple soules and of no reputation amongst men, being endued also with no eloquence at all, hath subdued the whole world so easily by the only voice of the Gospell, whereas now with-
standing

standing Satan did resist him with so manie lets: he hath shewed a most manifest token of his diuine power and might therein. And also we see in the same, the incredible force of the Gospel, that it did not only come forth & shew it self, although the whole world did say nay, but also with great glorie and maiestie, make all that which did seeme stubborn, to be obedient vnto Christ. Therefore these few & simple creatures, did more preuaile against the troublesome tumults of the world, with the base & simple sound of their mouth, than if God should openly haue thrown down lightnings from heauen. And on the other side, the spirit of God teacheth vs, that the kingdome of Christ beginneth neuer sooner to flourish, but by and by Satban opposeth himselfe most furiously against the same, and vseth all his engines either vnto the overthrow, or force to shake the same. Neither are we onely taught, that Satban doth resist Christ as an enemie, but also that the whole world doth furiously rage together against him, that he may not reigne ouer them. Yea, furthermore that is to be set downe as a thing most certaine, that wicked men whiles they doe so rage against the Gospell, doe both fight vnder Satbans banner, and are pricked forward by him into so blind fire. Hereupon doe arise so many reproves, so manie plague conspiracies, so many diuellish inductions of the reprobate, to ouerthrow the Gospell, and to hinder the free passage of the same, which Luke setteth downe almost in euery place. Lastly, like as the Apostles haue indeede tried, that the doctrine of the Gospell is a fire and a sword, so may we learne by their experience that it will alwaies come to passe, not onely by the obstinate malice of Satan, but also by the fatal stubbornnes of men, that the Gospell shal suffer many conflicts, and that thereby many tumults shalbe raised. But on the other side he declareth that the Apostles with a stout stomacke, with a liuely courage, and invincible valianthe of minde, did notwithstanding execute the office which they knewe was inioyned them by God: & also what innumerable troubles they suffered with great perseverance, what wronges they passed ouer, how patiently they sustained most cruel persecution; and lastly how meekely they suffered reproch, sorrow, and calamitie of all sortes. And we must learne patience by such examples, seeing the sonne of God hath pronounced that the crosse and tribulation shall alwaies accompanie his Gospell: we must not pamper and cherish our selues with a vaine hope, as though the state and condition of the Church should be quiet, prosperous, and flourishing heere vpon earth. Let vs therefore addresse our selues to suffer the like things. And that is added as no small comfort for vs, that as God hath merueilously deliuered his Church in times past, being afflicted, and oppressed so many waies: so he will at this day be present with vs also: For surely seeing that in this booke is declared howe that God by his mightie hand & outstretched arme alone, doth continually defend his Church, being amidst continuall daies: God himselfe by this meanes setteth before our eyes his continuall providence in procuring the safetie thereof. Furthermore here are set downe certaine sermons of the Apostles, which increate in such sort of the great mercies of God, of the grace of Christ, of the hope of blessed immortalitye, of the calling vpon God, of repentance and the feare of God, and also of other principall pointes of Christian doctrine, that we neede not seeke the whole sum of godlinesse any where else. But that I may nowe omit the declaration of sound and pure doctrine: If that be a thing most needfull to be knowne, namely: to vnderstand how the Church of Christ first began: how the Apostles began to preach the Gospell; what successe they had in the same, what cruel combats they suffered, how

triumphantly they passed through so many lets, and impediments, how courageously they triumphed over all the pride of the world, vnder the reproch of the crosse, how wonderfully God was present with them: then must wee highly esteeme of this Booke, which vnles it were extant, the knowledge of so great things should either be quite buried, or greatly obscured, or wrapped in diuers doubtles. For we see that Sathan vsed all his engins that he might, to bring to passe, that neuer any of the acts of the Apostles might come to light, but such onely as were mixed with lies; to the end he might bring into suspicion what thing soeuer was spoken of them, and so by that meanes might plucke out of the mindes of the godly, all the remembrance of that age. For hee alwaies raised vp, either doting fooles, or craftie flatterers, that they might spread abroade a sort of filthy fables, vnder the names of other men; the blockishnes whereof did much discredite euen the true histories. So in those bookes of Peter and Paul which are faigned to be of Linus his doing, are contained such a sort of stinking trifles, that they cause the wicked to laugh at them, and the godly to loath them. So that feigned disputation of Peter with Symon Magus, is ridiculous, that it doeth discredite the name of a Christian. The same opinion must we haue of all that mingle mangle which is set before the recognitions and counsels of Clement, and recited of Gratianus in his fragments, they beguile the vnskillfull vnder colour of ancient names, the wicked boast of those as of oracles, no lesse boldly than impudently, when as in deede they are filthy roies. Sathan did vse such libertie to lie, that we might haue no certaine thing left vs, after Christs ascension. So that vnlesse this work of Luke were extant, it might seeme that Christ being taken vp into heauen, left no fruit of his death or resurrection vpon earth. For all should haue vanished away with his bodie. We should not know that Christ was so receiued into his celestiaall glorie, that neuertheles hee beareth rule in all the world: we should not know that the Gospel was published by the Apostles, and so came from them vnto vs, though by the meanes of others: we should not know that they were inspired by the holy Ghost, least they should teach any thing but that which was diuine, to the end our faith might be groundd onely vpon the vnfallible veritie of God. Last of all we shoulde not knowe that that Prophecie of Esaias was fulfilled, wherein he foresold that the law should come out of Sion, and the word of the Lord

out of Ierusalem. Seeing this booke proceeding no doubt from the spirite of God, taketh from vs all doubting of these thinges, wee must counte
the same as a great treasure, as I haue said before not
without cause, and nowe againe confirme
the same.



The Commentaries of M. Jo. Calvin vpon the Actes of the Apostles.

CHAP. I.

THe former speech truly haue we had, & Theophilus, of al thing: which Iesus began to do and teach,
Euen vntill that day, wherein after he had giuen commaundemens by the holie Ghost to the Apostles, which he had chosen, he was taken vp.

THat he may passe ouer vnto those things which followed the ascension of Christ: he briefly gathereth the sum of all those, which before hee had handled in the former booke, that he may annexe this thereunto. And he briefly setteth downe this description of the historie of the Gospel, that it is a narration of those things which Christ did & said so long as he was conuerfant vpon earth. Furthermore whereas they interpret this commonlie, that there was first in Christ puritie of life, before such time as hee began to preach, it maketh nothing vnto Luke his mind. Truth it is, that the manners of a good and godly teacher ought so to be framed, that he speake first with his life, then with his tongue, otherwise he should differ nothing from a stage plaier. But Luke hath respect rather vnto that which he had said about the end of his Gospel, namely, that Christ was a prophet mightie in deed and word, that is, such a one as did excell no lesse in deeds than in words: Although there be but small difference betwixt these two places. For the mightines of works which is commended there, doth belong vnto his miracles, but this, To do, doth reach further in my opinion, namely, that vnder the same are comprehended all the famous acts which were proper vnto his ministrie, wherein his death & resurrection are the chiefeest. For the office of the Messias did not onely consist in doctrine, but it was also be houeul that he should make peace betweene God and man, that he should be a redeemer of the people, a restorer of the kingdome, and an author of euerlasting felicitie. Al these things, I say, as they were promised of the Messias, so were they looked for at his hands. Now we see that the sum of the Gospel consisteth of these two parts, namely of the doctrine of Christ, & of his actes: for as much as he did not onely bring vnto men that embassage which was giuen him in charge of his father: but also performed al things that could be required of the Messias. He began his kingdome, he pacified God with his sacrifice, he purged mans sins with his owne precious blood, hee subdued death and the diuel, he restored vs vnto true libertie, he purchased righteousness & life for vs. And to the end, that whatsoeuer he either did or said might be certaine, he proued himself by miracles to be the sonne of God

God. So that this worde to Doc, is extended vnto his miracles also: but it must not be restrained onely vnto the same. Heere must we note that those which haue onely the bare knowledge of the history, haue not the Gospel: vnlesse the knowledg of the doctrine which maketh manifest the fruits of the Actes of Christ, be adioyned thereunto. For this is a holy knot which no man may dissolue. Therefore whensoever mention is made of the doctrine of Christ, let vs learne to adioyne therunto his workes, as scales whereby the truth therof is established and confirmed, and the effect declared. Furthermore that we may reape commoditie by his death and resurrection, and also that miracles may haue their vse, we must alwayes haue respect vnto him that speaketh. For this is the true rule of Christianitie.

Of all things which he began. I do not greatly mislike the interpretation which some giue of this place, that Luke saide rather of all, then all, because it is possible in some measure to intreat of the workes and doctrine of Christ. But to set downe the whole course, that the narration may be perfect, were a matter of great weight. Like as Iohn doth declare that the world could not containe the bookes. That is also to be noted, that Luke saith, that he began his historie at the beginning of the workes of Christ. But so soon as he hath declared the natiuity of Christ, he passeth ouer vnto the twelfth yeare of his age: and after he had briefly spoken of his disputation had in the temple with the doctores, passing ouer **xviii.** yeares without speaking any thing of them, he entereth the iust narration of the workes of Christ. It is therefore manifest that those workes and sayings onely, which make any thing vnto the sum of our saluation, are noted in this place. For after that Christ came abroad into the world clothed with our flesh, he liued priuately at home vntil he was **xxx.** yeeres of age, at which time his Father put vpon him an other manner of person. God woulde haue him to leade the former part of his life obscurely, to this ende, that the knowledge of these things might be more excellent which do edifie our faith.

The former speech. It seemed good to me, to translate this on this wise, because *logon poieshai*, is the same with the Grecians which *verba facere*, or, to speak, is with the Latins, as Budgus doth note. And we must vnderstand the contrarietie of the second part, which he taketh in hand, that we may knowe that the Euangelist determined with himselfe afresh, to write, hauing new matter whereupon to write.

Euen vntill that day. Therefore the ascension of Christ is the ende of the historie of the Gospel. For hee hath ascended, saith Paul, that hee might fulfill all things. Our faith gathereth other fruite thereby: but it shall be sufficient to note in this place, that our redemption was fullie complete and finished then, when Christ did ascend vnto his Father: and therefore that Luke did fully performe his duetie in this narration, as touching the doctrine and workes of Christ. And he is said to be taken vp, that wee may know that he is truly departed out of this worlde, least we should consent vnto their dotings, who think, that in his ascension there was no alteration of place made.

Commandement by the holy Ghost. Luke sheweth in these wordes, that Christ did not so depart out of the world, that he did no longer care for vs: for in that he hath ordained a perpetual gouernment in his Church, he thereby declareth that hee had a care to prouide for our saluation: yea he hath promised that he wilbe present with his, to the ende, like as in deede hee is alwayes present by his ministers. Luke therefore doth shew vnto vs, that Christ did no sooner depart hence, but straight waie he prouided for the gouernment of his Church: whence we may gather, that he is carefull for our saluation: and this his prouidence hath Paul plainly noted in the place lately cited, when he saith, that he hath fulfilled all things, making some Apostles, some Euangelists, some pastors, &c. But these commandements which the Euangelist saith, Christ gaue vnto his disciples; do I interpret of the preaching of the Gospel: like as ambassadors vse to be instructed with certaine precepts, before they go of their ambassage, least they should rashly attempt any thing contrarie to his will and minde that sendeth them. And all this is spoken in commendation of that doctrine which the Apostles taught. The which that it may appeare more manifestly, euery thing is to be marked in order as it lieth. First of al he saith, they were elect & chose of Christ, that we may be certaine of their calling vnto that function. Neither doth he in this place set Gods election against mans merites, but onely affirmeth that they were raised vp by God, & that they did not rashly take vpon them this function. That is true in deede, that they were freely chosen: but nowe haue we to inquire what is Lukes drift in this place. I say that he hath respect vnto nothing else, but that we may bee certaine of the calling of the Apostles, that we may learne not to haue respect vnto men, but vnto the son of God, the author thereof, because this must alwayes be a maxime in the Church, that No man vsurpe any honor. Secondly, he saith, that they were instructed of Christ what they should do. As if he should say, that they vttered not their owne inuentions, but they deliuered that sincerelie and faithfullie, which was inioyned them by their heavenly Maister. And to the ende that that which Christ taught them might bee the more reuerenced, hee addeth this, that this was done by the direction of the holy Ghost. Not because the sonne of God had any neede to bee guided by any other, who is eternall wisdom: but because he was also man, least any man shoulde thinke that he did deliuer those things vnto his disciples, which he deliuered by mans wit and reason, hee calleth vs backe expresly vnto the diuine authoritie. Like as the Lorde himselfe doeth so often affirme that he taught nothing but that which hee had receiued of his Father: and therefore hee saith, that his doctrine was not his owne. Therefore he signifieth that in the preaching of the Gospel there is nothing which issueth from mans braine: but that it is the diuine ordinance of the spirit, whereunto the whole world must be subiect.

Mar. 28. 20.

3 To whom also he shewed himselfe aliuie, after that he had suffered, in manie proofes, whiles that he is secene of them by the space of fortie dayes, and he in-

treareth of the kingdome of God.

4 And when hee had gathered them together, hee commanded them that they should not depart from Ierusalem: but that they should waite for the promise of the Father: whereof, saith he, yee haue heard of me:

5 Because Iohn truly baptised with water: but you shall be baptised with the holy Ghost, after a few daies.

3 Vnto whom &c. He addeth this, that he might make the resurrection to be beleueed, as a thing most necessarie to be knowne, and without the which the whole Gospel falleth flat to the ground, neither remaineth there any more faith. And that I may omit to speake of other commodities that come by being ignorant of the resurrection of Christ: the Gospel loseth his whole authoritie, vnlesse we know and be also fully perswaded that Christ being aliue, speaketh vnto vs from the heauens: Whereunto Luke hath chiefest respect in this place. Therefore that the truth hereof might not be called in question, he saith that it was proued by many signes and tokens. Those which Erasmus, following an old interpreter, doeth call arguments, I haue translated proofes. For Aristotle doth call that *Tecmerion* in the first booke of his Rhetorikes, which is necessarie in signes. This is therefore that which I said before, that Christ did make manifest his resurrection vnto his Apostles by euident tokens which did serue instead of necessary proofes, least they should doubt of the same. Furthermore he doth not reckon vp those tokens and signes: sauing onely that he saith, that Christ did appeare vnto them about the space of a month and one halfe oftentimes. If he had but once appeared vnto them, it might haue bin somewhat suspicious: but in shewing himself so often vnto them, he dissolucth all doubtess which might arise in their minds, & by this meanes also he putteth away the reproch of the ignorance, which he said was in the Apostles, least it discredit their preaching.

He intreateth of the kingdome of God. He telleth vs againe that the Apostles themselues were well taught, before such time as they tooke vpon the to teach others. Therefore whatsoeuer things they vttered & brought to light, either by word or by writing, touching the kingdom of god, they are those speeches which Christ himselfe vttered. And heereby doth he briefly set downe the end of the doctrine of the Gospel: namelie, that God may reigne in vs. Regeneration is the beginning of this kingdome, & the end therof is blessed immortalitie: the midle proceedings are in a more ample going forward & increase of regeneratio. But that this thing may appeare more euidently, we must first note, that we are borne, and that we liue aliants and strangers from the kingdome of God, vntil such time as god doth fashion vs again vnto a new life. Therefore we may properly set the world, the flesh, & whatsoeuer is in mans nature, against the kingdome of God, as contrary to it. For the natural man is wholly occupied about the things of this world, and he seeketh felicitie here. In the mean season we are as it were banished from god, & he likewise from vs. But Christ by the preaching of the gospel doth lift vs vp vnto the meditation of the life to come. And to the end he may the better bring this to passe, he reformeth all our earthly affections, & so hauing stript vs out of

the vices of our flesh, he separateth vs from the world. And like as eternall death is prepared for all those which liue after the flesh; so in as much as the inward man is renewed in vs, that we may go forward in the spirituall life, we drawe neerer vnto the perfection of the kingdome of God: which is the Societie of the glorie of God. Therefore God will reigne in and amongst vs now, that he may at length make vs partakers of his kingdom. Hereby we gather that Christ did principally intreat of the corruption of mankind; of the tyrannie of sin, whose bondslaues we are; of the curse & guiltines of eternall death, whereunto we al are subiect, & also of the meanes to obtaine saluation, of the remission of sins; of the denying of the flesh, of spirituall righteousnes, of hope of eternal life, and of such like things. And if we will be rightlie instructed in Christianitie, we must apply our studies to these things.

4. *Gathering them together he commanded, &c.* They had before done the dutie of Apostles; but that lasted but a while: and secondlie so farre forth that they might with their preaching awake the Iewes to heare their master. And so that commandement to teach, which Christ had giuen them whiles he liued with them vpon earth, was as it were a certain entrance into their Apostleship which was to come, for which they were not yet ripe. Therefore their ordinarie function was not laid vpon them, vntill such time as Christ was risen againe: but they stirred vp their nation, as (I haue said) like criers; that they might giue care to Christ. And then at length after the resurrection they were made Apostles, to publish abroad throughout the whole world, that doctrine which was committed to the. And whereas after they were made Apostles, Christ commandeth them as yet to abstaine from their office, that is done not without iust cause; yea many causes may be alledged why it shold be so. That filthy forsaking of their master was yet fresh: many notes and tokens of vnbeliefe were yet fresh. Whereas they had bin so thoroughly taught and had so sodainly forgotten al, they shewed a manifest token of their great dulnes of wit. Neither were they free from sluggishnes, which could not otherwise fitly be purged, than by deferring the promised grace, that he might the more sharpe their desire. But this cause is chiefly to be noted, that the Lord did appoint a certaine time for the sending of the Spirit, that the miracle might be the more apparant. Again he suffered them to rest a while, that he might the better set forth the greatnes of that busines which he was about to commit vnto them. And thereby is the truth of the gospel confirmed, because the Apostles were forbidden to addresse themselves to preach the same, vntill they shoulde be well prepared in succession of time. And they were commanded to stay together, because they should all haue one spirit giuen them. If they had bin dispersed, the vntie should not haue bin so wel knowne. Though they were scattered abroad afterward in diuers places, yet because they brought that which they had from one & the same fountain; it was as al one, as if they alwaies had had al one mouth. Furthermore it was expedient that they shoulde begin to preach the Gospel at Ierusalem, that the Prophecie might be fulfilled. There shall

Esa. 2. 3.

shall a law go out of Syon, & the word of the Lord out of Ierusalem. Although the participle *finalizomēnos* may bee diuersly translated; yet Erasmus his translation did please me best, because the signification of gathering together, wil agree better with the text.

They should wait for the. It was meete that these should be accustomed to obey first, who should shortly after lay Christs yoke vpon the necke of the world. And surely they haue taught vs by their example, that we must worke and rest at the Lordes pleasure alone. For if during our life we goe on warfare vnder his banner, and conduct: surely hee ought to haue no lesse authoritie ouer vs, than anie earthlie captaine hath in his armie. Therefore as warlike discipline requireth this, that no man wagge, vnlesse hee be commaunded by the captaine: so it is not lawfull for vs either to go out, or to attempt any thing vntill the Lord giue the watchword: and so soone as hee bloweth the retreat, we must staie. Moreouer wee are taught that wee are made partakers of the giftes of God through hope. But we must marke the nature of hope as it is described in this place. For that is not hope; which euery man feigneth to himselfe vnadvisedly, but that which is grounded in the promise of God. Therefore Christ doeth not suffer his Apostles to looke for whatsoever they will, but hee addeth expresse, The promise of the Father. Furthermore, hee maketh himselfe a witnesse thereof: because wee ought to bee so sure and certaine, that although all the engines of hell gainestande vs, yet this may remaine surelie fixed in our mindes, that we haue beleueed God; I knowe saith Paule whom I haue beleueed.

2. Tim. 1. 12

And heere hee putteth them in minde of those things which are written in Iohn the 14. and 15. and 16. I will pray the father; and hee shall giue you another comforter, that hee may continue with you: I saie

Iohn. 14. 16.

the Spirit of trueth, &c. Againe, I haue spoken these things vnto you, whiles I am with you. And the Spirit whom my Father shall send

14. 25.

Iohn. 15. 26.

in my name, shall teach you all things, &c. And againe, When the Spirit of trueth shall come, whom I will sende from my father, he shall

Iohn. 16. 7.

bear witness of me. And againe, If I shall go hence, I will send you the comforter, who shall reprove the world. And he had saide long before,

Iohn. 7. 38.

Hee which beleueth in mee, out of his belly shall flowe riuers of liuing water.

5 *Because Iohn truelie.* Christ repeateth this vnto his Apostles out of Iohns owne wordes. For some part of them had heard that at Iohns mouth, which the Euangelistes report, I truely baptise you with water: but hee that commeth after mee, shall baptise you with the holie Ghost and with fire. Nowe Christ pronounceth that they shall well perceiue that that is true in deede which he saide: Furthermore this serueth greatlie to confirme the sentence next going before. For it is an argument drawne from the office of Christ. And that thus:

Iohn was sent to baptise with water, he fulfilled his function, as it became the seruant of God. The sonne of God is sent to baptise with the holie Ghost: it remaineth therefore that he do his dutie. Neither can it be otherwise, but he must doe that which his father hath commaunded

him

him to do, and for which also he came downe into the earth. But it seemeth a verie absurde thing to restraine that vnto the visible sending of the holie Ghost, which was spoken vniuersallie of regeneration. I answered, that Christ did not then onely baptise with the holie Ghost, when as he sent him vnder the forme of fyrie tongues: for he had baptised his Apostles before this: and he baptiseth all the elect thus daylie. But because the sending of the holy Ghost after so glorious a sort, was a token of the hidden grace, wherewith he doth daily inspire his elect, he doth fitly applie thereunto the testimonie of Iohn. And truely this was as though it had beene the common baptism of the Church. For besides that the Apostles did not receiue the spirit for themselves onely, but for the vse of all the faithfull: there was also declared the vniuersall fauour of Christ towards his Church, whiles that he poured out thereupon the gistes of his spirite in great abundance. Although, therefore hee doeth daily baptise the elect of his father, yet was this no let why he might not shewe forth this token, to be remeimbred aboue all other: that the Apostles might knowe that they were onely entred by Iohn: and that not in vaine, seeing their perfection was harde at hande. And that is frivolous which some gather out of this place most commonly, namely, that the baptism of Iohn, and the baptism of Christ were diuerse. For heere doth not he dispute in this place of baptism, but maketh onely a comparison betwixt the person of Iohn & the person of Christ. When as Iohn did say that he did baptise with water onely, hee did not reason of what sort his baptism was, but what he himselfe was: least he should arrogate that vnto himselfe, which was proper to Christ. As also the ministers in these daies ought not to speake otherwise of themselves: but they must acknowledge Christ to bee the author of all those things, which they do prefigure in the outward baptism, and leaue nothing to themselves, saue onely the outward administration. For when as these titles are attributed vnto baptism, namely, that it is the lauer of regeneration, a washing away of sinnes, the fellowship of death, and burying with Christ, and a grassing into the bodie of Christ: it is not declared what man, being the Minister of the outward signe doth; but rather what Christ doeth, who onely giueth force and efficacie vnto the signes. We must alwayes hold fast this distinction, least whiles we decke man too much, we take from Christ. But here may a question be moued why he doeth rather name Iohn here, than any other. First, it is manifest ynough that Iohn did professe himselfe to bee the minister of the outward signe, namely, of water, and that Christ was the author of the spirituall baptism. Secondly because it was meete that Iohn shoulde decrease, and Christ increase. And thirdlie because the Apostles did so much esteeme of Iohn, it might haue beene that thereby the glorie of Christ might haue beene obscured. Therefore Christ to the ende hee might reclaime them to himselfe, telleth them that Iohn did onelic minister vnto them the externall baptism; notwithstanding hee confirmeth them also, least they should doubt of the promise.

Tit. 3.5.

Rom. 5.4.

Iohn. 3.30.

For they did attribute verie much vnto Iohn, and therefore were they perswaded that the Baptisme which they had receiued by him, was not in vaine. Now if that the veritie and force thereof must be looked for at Christ his hands, then ought the Apostles, to hope that that shal surelie be fulfilled which Iohn prefigured.

So must we in like manner thinke, that we are not in vaine baptised with water, by men; bicause Christ, who commaunded the same to bee done, will fulfill his office, and baptise vs with the spirite. So faith draweth a consequent from the outward signe, vnto the inwarde effect; yet doeth it not attribute anie more than is meete; either to the signe, or to the minister thereof; because in the signe it onely looketh vnto the promise, which is Christs; and doeth acknowledge him to be the onelie author of grace. Let vs therefore vse such a meane that we do in no part diminish Christs honor: and yet neuerthelesse let vs hope for that fruit by our baptism which is noted in this place. By assigning so short a time, our sauiour maketh them more ioyfull to hope well. Whereupon it followeth that that death was not to be lamented; which brought with it presently so precious fruite. And let vs note this also, that this worde baptism is vsed improperly in this place, that the contrarietie may be full. After the same sort, Paule in his Epistle vnto the Romans, after he hath set downe the lawe of workes, to the ende that the contrarie may answer on the other side, he vseth the law of faith, for faith it selfe.

Rom. 3. 26.

6 And when they were gathered together, they asked him, saying, Lorde, dost thou at this time restore the kingdome vnto Israel?

7 And he said vnto them, It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the father hath placed in his owne power.

8 But you shall receiue power when as the spirit shall come vpon you; and you shall be witnesses vnto me as well at Ierusalem, as in all Iurie, and in Samaria; and vnto the farthest part of the earth.

6 He sheweth that the Apostles were gathered together when as this question was moued, that we may know that it came not of the foolishnes of one or two, that it was moued; but it was moued by the common cōsent of them al. But merueilous is their rudenes, that whē as they had bin diligently instructed by the space of three wholyeres; they bewray no lesse ignorance; than if they had heard neuer a worde. There are as manie errors in this question as words. They aske him as concerning a kingdome: but they dreame of an earthly kingdome, which should flow with riches, with dainties, with externall peace, and with such like good things. And whiles they assigne the present time to the restoring of the same: they desire to triumph before the batell. For before such time as they begin to worke, they will haue their wages. They are also greatly deceived hierein; in that they restraine Christ his kingdome vnto the carnall Israel, which was to be spread abroade, euen vnto the vntermost parts of the worlde. Furthermore, there is this fault in all their whole question, namely, that they desire to know those things which are not

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meēt for them to know. No doubt they were not ignorant what the prophets did prophesie concerning the restoring of Dauids kingdome: they had oftentimes heard their master preach cōcerning this matter. Lastly it was a saying common in euerie mans mouth, that in the most miserable captiuitie of the people, they should all bee comforted, with the expectation of the kingdome that should bee. Now they hoped for the restoring heereof at the comming of the *Messias*. And hereuppon was it, that so soone as the Apostles sawe their master Christe risen from the dead, they straightway beganne to thinke thereupon: but in the meane time they declared thereby, how bad scholers they were vnder so good a master. Therefore doth Christe briefly comprehend in this short answer, all the errors wherinto they fell in this their question, as I shall straightway declare. To restore, in this place doth signifie, to set vp againe that which was fallen, and through many ruines growen out of fashion: for out of the drie stocke of *Isai*, should spring a braunche, and the tabernacle of Dauid, which was laid waste, should bee erected and set on foot againe.

7 *It is not for you to know, &c.* This is a generall reprehension of all the whole questiō, for it was too curious for them to desire to know that whereof their master woulde haue them ignoraunt. But this is the true meane to become wise: namely, to goe as farre forward in learning, as our master Christ goeth in teaching: and willingly to be ignorāt of those things, which he doth conceale from vs. But forasmuch as there is naturally ingendred in vs a certaine foolish and vaine curiositie, and also a certaine rash kinde of boldnesse: we must diligently obserue this admonition of Christ, whereby he correcteth both these vices. But to the end we may know what his meaning is hereby, we must mark the two members which he ioineth together. It is not for you (saith he) to know those things which the father hath placed in his owne power. Hee speaketh in deed of the times & seasons: but seeing there is the like reason in other things, we must thinke this to be an vniuersall precept: that beeing contented with the reuelation of God, we think it an haynous crime to enquire anie further: this is the true meane betweene the two extremes. The Papistes, that they may haue somewhat wherewith to cloke their grosse ignorance, say for themselves, that they omit the hidden mysteries of God: as though our whole faith and religion did consist vpon any thing els, than vpon the hidden mysteries of god. Then may we take our leaue of Christ and his Gospell, if we must abstain vtterly from the hidden mysteries of God. But we must keepe, as I said before, a mean herein. For we must be desirous to learn, so farre as our heavenly master doth teach vs: but as for such things, as hee will haue vs ignorant of, let none be so bolde as to enquire after them, that we may be wise with sobrietic. Therefore so often as wee are vexed with this foolish desire of knowing more than we ought, let vs call to minde this saying of Christ, *It is not for you to know*. For vnlesse we will burst in against his will and commandement: this shall haue force and strength enough to restrain the outrageousnesse of our wits. Now as touching the foreknowledge of times,

Gen. 8. 22.

Christ condemneth only the searching out thereof, which reacheth beyond the measure of Gods reuelation, & that is to bee noted out of the second member, as before I haue saide: which the father hath placed in his owne power, Truth it is that God hath in his owne power, Winter & Sommer, and the rest of the seasons of the yeere, cold & heat, faire weather & foule. But because he hath testified that the course of the yeeres shalbe perpetuall, he is said not to haue placed that in his owne power, which he hath reuealed vnto men. What thing focuer the philosophers or husbandmen doe comprehend or vnderstand by Art, by learning, by iudgement, or experience, all that doth God not reteine vnto himselfe, because he hath after a certaine sort reueiled it vnto them. The same opinion must we haue of the prophets: for it was their office to know those things which God did reueale. But wee must be ignorant of the secreete euentes of things, as touching the time to come. For there is nothing which may make vs more slack in doing our duties, than too carefull an inquisition herein. For we wil alwaies take counsell according to the future euent of things, but the Lord by hiding the same from vs, doth prescribe vnto vs what we ought to do. Here ariseth a conflict, because wee will not willingly suffer God to haue that which is his own: namely, the sole government & direction of things which are to come: but wee cast our selues into a strange & inordinate carefulnesse. To conclude, Christ forbiddeth vs to applie those things vnto our selues, which God doth chalenge as proper to himselfe alone. Of this sort is the foreknowledge of those things which god hath taken to himselfe to gouerne & direct, according to his owne pleasure, far contrary to our opinion, and otherwise than we could inuent.

You shal receiue power. Our saviour Christ doth here call them backe as wel vnto the promise of god, as also vnto his commandment, which was the readiest way to bridle their curiositie. Curiositie doth rise almost alwaies either of idleness or els of distrust: distrust is cured by meditating vpon the promises of god. And his commandments do tell vs how wee ought to occupy our selues & imploy our studies. Therefore he commandeth his disciples to wait for the promise of God, & to be diligent in executing their office wherunto God had called them. And in the meane season he noteth their great hastinesse, in that they did preposterously catch at those gifts which wer proper vnto the holy Spirit, whenas they were not as yet indued with the same. Neither did they take the right way herein, in that being called to goe on warfare, they desire (omitting their labor) to take their ease in their ynnce. Therefore when he saith *you shal receiue power*: he admonisheth the of their imbecillitie, least they follow before the time, those things wherunto they can not attain. It may be read very wel either way, *You shall receiue the power of the spirit*: or, *The spirit comming vpon you*: yet the latter way seemeth to be the better, because it doth more fully declare their defect and want, vntill such time as the Spirit should come vpon them.

You shall be my witnesses. He correcteth two errors of theirs in this one sentence. For first he sheweth that they must fight, before they can triumph: and secondly, that the nature of Christ his kingdome was of ano-

ther sort than they iudged it to haue been. Therefore saith he, *You shalbe my witness*: that is, the husbandman must first work before he can reape his fruites. Hence may we learne, that we must first studie how wee may come vnto the kingdome of God, before wee begin to dispute about the state of the life to come. Manie there be, which doe curiously enquire what maner blessednes that shall bee, which they shall inioy after they shalbe receiued into the euerlasting kingdome of heauen: not hauing anie care how they may com to inioy the same. They reason concerning the qualitie of the life to come, which they shall haue with Christe. But they neuer thinke that they must bee partakers of his death, that they may liue together with him. Let euery mā therefore applic himself in his work, which he hath in hand: let vs fight stoutly vnder Christ his banner: let vs go forward manfully & couragiously in our vocation, and God wil giue frute in due time & tide. There followeth another correction, when he saith, that they must be his witnesses. For hereby hee meant to driue out of his disciples minds that fond & false imagination, which they had conceiued of the terrestrial kingdome, because hee sheweth vnto them briefely, that his kingdome consisteth in the preaching of the Gospell. There was no cause therefore why they should dreame of riches, of externall principallitie, or any other earthly thing, whilst they heard that Christ did then reigne, when as he subdueth vnto himself all the whole worlde by the preaching of the Gospell. Whereupon it followeth that he doth reigne spiritually, & not after any worldly maner. And that which the Apostles had conceiued of the carnall kingdom, proceeded from the cōmon error of their nation. Neither was it maruell if they were deceiued herein. For when we measure the same with our vnderstāding, what els can we cōceiue, but that which is grosse & terrestrial: Hereupō it cōmeth, that like brute beasts we only desire that which is commodius for our flesh, & therefore we rather catch that which is present. Wherefore we see that those which held opinion, that Christ should reigne as a king in this world a thousand yeres, fel into the like follie. Heereupon also they applied al such prophetes as did describe the kingdom of Christ figuratiuely by the similitude of earthly kingdoms vnto the cōmodity of their flesh: whereas notwithstanding it was gods purpose to lift vp their minds higher. As for vs, let vs learne to apply our mindes to heare the Gospel preached, least we bee intangled in like errors, which prepareth a place in our hearts for the kingdom of Christ.

In all India. Here he sheweth first that they must not work for the space of one day only, while that he assigneth the whole worlde vnto them in which they must publish the doctrin of the gospel. Furthermore he refuteth the opiniō which they had cōceiued of Israel. They supposed those to be Israelites only, which were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. Christ testifieth, that they must gather therunto all *Samaritans*: which although they wer nigh in situatiō, yet were they far distant in minde and hart. He sheweth that al other regiōs far distāt & also prophane, must be vnited vnto the holy people, that they may be al partakers of one & the same grace. It is euident *Iohn. 4.* how greatly the Iewes did detest the *Samaritans*. Christ cōmādeth that (the wal of separatiō being brokē down) they

2. Tim. 2. 11

Iohn. 4. 9

Ephc. 2. 14. they be both made one bodie, that his kingdome may be erected euerie where. By naming Iudea and Ierusalem, which the Apostles had tried to be full of most deadly enemies: he foretelleth them of the great busines & trouble which was prepared for the, that he may cause them to cease to think vpon this triumph which they hoped to haue bene so nigh at hand. Neither could they be a little afraide to come before so cruell enemies, more to inflame their rage and furie. And here we see howe hee giueth the former place vnto the Iewes, because they were as it were the first begotten. Notwithstanding he calleth those Gentiles one with another, which were before strangers from the hope of saluatiō. Hereby wee learne that the Gospel was preached euerie where by the manifest commandement of Christ, that it might also come vnto vs.

Exod. 4. 22.

Ephc. 2. 11.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, hee was taken vp on high, and a cloude receiued him out of their sight.

10 And whyle they looked vp stedfastly into heauen, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in wise apperrell,

11 Which also saide: Yee men of Galile, why stande yee gazing vp into heauen? this same Iesus which is taken vp from you into heauen, shall so come as you haue seen him goe into heauen.

9 The readers may learn out of our institutiōs what profit we reape by the ascension of Christ Notwithstanding because it is one of the cheifest points of our faith, therefore doth Luke induor more diligently to proue the same: yea rather the Lord himselfe meant to put the same out of al doubt, when as he hath ascended so manifestly, & hath confirmed the certaintie of the same by other circumstances. For if so be it he had vanished away secretly, then might the disciples haue doubted what was become of him: but now sith that they being in so plain a place, saw him taken vp, with whom they had been conuersant, whom also they hearde speake euen now, whom they beheld with their eies; whom also they see taken out of their sight by a cloude, there is no cause why they shoulde doubt whither he was gone. Furthermore the angels are there also to beare witness of the same. And it was needfull that the historie shoulde haue been set downe so diligently for our cause, that we may know assuredly, that although the sonne of God appeare no where vpon earth, yet doth he liue in the heauens. And this seemeth to be the reason, why the cloude did ouershadow him, before suche time as hee did enter into his celestiaall glorie: that his disciples beeing content with their measure might cease to enquire any further. And we are taught by the that our minde is not able to ascend so high, as to take a full view of the glory of Christ: therefore let this cloud be a meane to restraine our boldnesse, as was the smoke which was continually before the dore of the tabernacle in the time of the lawe.

* Or, vnder the lawe.

10 Two men. Hee calleth them so, by reason of their forme. For although it might be that they had the bodies of men in deed, concerning which thing I will not greatly stande in defence of either party, yet

certaine

certaine it is, they were not men. But because this *Metonymia* is commonly vsed in the scriptures, especially in the first booke of Moses: I will not greatly stand thereupon. Their white garments were a token of rare & excellent dignitie. For God meant by this, as by an euident token to distinguish them from the commo sort of people, that the disciples might giue better care vnto them: and that at this day we also may knowe that this vision was shewed them of God.

Ye men of Galilee, &c. I am not of their opinion, who thinke that this name was giuen the Apostles after an opprobrious sort, as if the Angels meant to reprehend the slownes & dulnes of the apostles. In my opinion it was rather to make them more attentiuely, in that men whom they did neuer see before did name them, as though they had perfectly knowie them. But they seeme to be reprehended without cause, for looking vp into heauen. For where should they rather seeke for Christ, than in heauen? Doth not the scriptures also oftentimes exhort vs therinto: I answer, that they were not therefore reprehended, because they looked vp towards heauen; but because they coueted to see Christ, when as the cloudes, which was put between them and him, did keepe them from seeing him with their bodily senses: Secondly, because they hoped that he would returne againe straight way, that they might enioy the sight of him againe, when as he did ascende to stay in the heauens, vntill suche time as hee should come to iudge the world. Wherefore let vs first learn out of this place, that we must not seeke Christ either in heauen, either vp6 earth, otherwise the by faith: & also that we must not desire to haue him present with vs bodily in the world: for he that doth either of those two, shal oftentimes go farther fro him. So this their admiration is reprehended, not simply, but inasmuch as they were astonished at the strangeness of this matter: like as we are oftentimes carried vnadvisedly into a wonderfull great wondering at Gods workes: but we neuer apply our selues to consider for what end and purpose they were done.

Iesus, which is taken vp into heauen. There are two members in this one sentence. The first is, that Christe was taken vp into heauen, that they may not hence forth foolishly desire, to haue him any longer conversant with them vpon earth. The other is straightway: added as a consolation, concerning his second comming. Out of these two jointly and also seuerally is gathered a firm, stable, and strong argument, to refute the Papists, and all other which imagine that Christ is really present in the signes of bread and wine. For when it is said that Christ is taken vp into heauen: heere is plainly noted the distance of place. I graunt that this word *heauen*, is interpreted diuers waies, somtime for the ayre, sometime for the whole connexion of the spheres, somtimes for the glorious kingdom of God, where the maiestie of God hath his proper seat, howeouer it doth fill the whole world. After which sort Paul doth place Christ about all heauens, because he is about all the world, and hath the chiefest roome in that place of blessed immortalitie, because he is more excellent than all the Angels. But this is no let why he may not be absent from vs bodilie, and that by this worde *heauen*, there may not be signifi-

Ephe. 1. 22.
& 4. 15.

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ed a separation from the worlde. Let them caull as much as they will, it is euident that the heauen wherinto Christ was receiued, is opposite to the frame of the worlde: therefore it doth necessarily folow, that if he be in heauen, he is without the world. But first we must mark what the purpose of the Angels was: for thereby we shall more perfectly know what the words mean. The angels intent was to call back the apostles frō desiring the carnall presence of Christ. For this purpose was it that they said that he should not come again, vntill he came to iudge the world. And to this end serueth the assigning of the time, that they might not look for him in vaine before that same time. Who seeth not that in these words is manifestly shewed, that he was bodily absent out of the world? who seeth not that we are forbidden to desire to haue him vpo the earth. But they think they escape safe with that craftie answer, when as they say that then he shall come visibly: but he cometh now inuisibly daile. But wee are not here to dispute of his forme; only the Apostles are taught, that Christ must abide in heauen, vntill such time as he appeare at the latter day. For the desiring of his corporall presence is here condemned as absurd & peruerse. The Papiſts denie that hee is present in the Sacrament carnally, while that his glorious body is present with vs after a supernaturall sort, & by a miracle: but wee may wel enough reiect their inuention concerning his glorious bodie, as childish & friuolous toies. They feigne vnto themselves a miracle not confirmed with any testimonie of scripture. The bodie of Christ was then glorious, when as he was conuerſant with his disciples after his resurrection. That was done by the extraordinary & ſecrer power of God: yet notwithstanding, the angels doe forbid to desire him afterwarde after that sort, and they say that he shall not come vnto men in that sort before the latter day. Therefore according to their commandement, let vs not goe about to pull him out of the heauens with our own inuentions: neither let vs think that wee can handle him with our handes, or perceiue him with our other senses, more than wee can see him with our eyes. I speake alwaies of his bodie. For in that they say it is infinit, as it is an absurd dream, so is it safely to be reiected. Neuertheles I willingly confesse that Christ is ascended, that he may fulfil al things: but I say that he is spread abroad euerie wher by the power of his spirit, not by the substance of his flesh. I graunt furthermore that he is present with vs both in his word, & in the sacraments. Neither is it to be doubted, but that al those which do with faith receiue the signs of his flesh & blood, are made truly partakers of his flesh and blood. But this partaking doth nothing agree with the doings of the Papiſts. For they feigne that Christ is present in such sort vpon the Altar, as *Numa Pompilius* did call downe his *Iupiter Elicium*: or as those witches did ſee downe the Moone from heauen with their inchauntments. But Christ by reaching vs the bread in his supper, doth will vs to lift vp our hearts into heauen, that we may haue life by his flesh & blood. So that we do not eat his flesh grossly, that we may liue thereby, but he powreth into vs by the ſecrer power of his spirit, his force and strength.

He shall so come. I haue said before, that by this consolation all sorrowe which

which we might conceiue, because of Christs absence, is mitigated, yea vterly taken away, when as we heare that he shall return again. And also the end, for which he shall come again, is to bee noted: namely, that hee shall come as a redeemer, & shal gather vs with him into blessed immortalitye. For as he doth not now sit idle in heauen (as *Homers* signifieth that his gods be busied only about their bellies:) so shal not he appeare again without profit. Therefore the only looking for Christs coming, must both restrain the importunate desires of our flesh, & support our patience in all our aduersities: & lastly it must refresh our wearines. But it worketh this only in the faithfull, which belecue that Christe is their redeemer. For it bringeth vnto the wicked nothing but dread, horror, & great fearfulness. And howsoeuer they do now scoff & iest whe as they hear of his coming, yet shall they bee compelled to behold him sitting vppon his tribunall seat, who now they wil not vouchsafe to heare speak. Furthermore it were but friuolous to moue any question about his apparrell, wherwith he was the clothed, whether he shal com again being clothed with the same or no. Neither am I now determined to refute that which *Augustine* in his Epistle vnto *Consentius* doth touch: notwithstanding it is better for me to omit that thing which I cannot vnfold.

August. ad
Con. epist.
146.

12 Then they returned vnto Hierusalem from the mountain which is called *Oliuets*, which is nigh vnto Ierusalē, being distāt about a Sabbath daies iourney.

13 And comming in, they went vp into an vpper chamber, where aboad Peter and *James*, *John* and *Andrew*, *Philip* & *Thomas*, *Bartholomew* & *Matthew*, *James the sonne of Alphens*, & *Simon Zelotes*, & *Iudas the brother of James*.

14 These all abode together with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and *Mary the mother of Iesus*, & with his brethren.

“ Or, women.

12 That he may passe ouer vnto another historic, he sheweth that the disciples being returned vnto Ierusalē, dwelt together in one parlor. For it was the vpper part of the house, which vsed to bee let out vnto those which did hire houses: for the most commodious places were reserved vnto them that were masters of the house for their owne vse. Wherefore by this word, *Luke* doth signifie that they were driuen into a strait room: & yet notwithstanding though this commoditie were great, yet they did not depart asunder. They might haue been more commodiously asunder, yet might they not part companie before they had receiued the Spirit. In that he noteth here the distance of place, it bringeth credit vnto the historie. Vnlesse peraduenture he meant hereby to declare, that they were not terrified with any feare of danger, but that they did all returne & kept companie together in one house, which was not so large, but that the companie being greater than the place could wel contain, it might breed some rumor or noise. A Sabbath dayes iourney was two miles, & that account doth well agree with the place of *Iohn*. chap. 11. 18. where he saith, that Ierusalē was distant from Bethanie almost fiftene furlonges, which containeth about a thousande and nine hundred paces. And the mount *Oliuet* was at the side of Bethanie. There was no Sabbath dayes iourney prescribed in the Law: for the Lorde doth commaund them simple, to rest vpon the Sabbath day in the Law.

But

Ier. 17. 24.

But because the Iewes coulde not easily be ruled, but that they would runne abroad about their businesse vpon the Sabbath day: (as the Lorde himselfe doth complaine, that they did beare burdens out at the gates) therefore it is to be thought that it was determined by the Pricstes (to the end they might restraine such enormities.) that no man should trauaile vpon the Sabbath day, about two miles. Although Ierom in his answeres vnto Algasia, doeth say that this tradition did come from two Rabines, namely, from *Atriba*, and from *Simon Heli*.

13 *Where they abode.* Some translate it, Where they did abide: as though they did vse to dwell there. But I am of that opinion, that they did then first of all vse that hired roome to dwell together in, vntill such time as the holy Spirit was come vpon them. Too too ridiculous are the Papists which goe about to proue Peter his supremacie hereby, because he is reckoned vp first of all the Apostles. Although we doe graunt that he was the chiefeest ruler of all the worlde. But if he bee therefore the chief of all the Apostles, because his name is first in the catalogue of the apostles names: I will againe conclude that the mother of Christe was inferior vnto all the rest of the women, because shee is reckoned the last, which they wil in no case admit, as in deed it were a thing too to absurd. Wherefore vnlesse they will set their papacie to bee laught at of al men, as hitherto they haue done, they must leaue of to adorn it with such foolish toyes. But what is their intent? Forsooth they will proue out of the scriptures, that there was a secondarie head of the Church, inferior to Christ: whereas ther is no syllable in the scripture, which is cōsenting vnto this their foolish inuentiō. No maruaile is it therefore, if they do snatch here and there certaine places, which although no man smite them out of their handes, they wil let fall of their owne accord. But omitting the, let vs marke what is Luke his purpose in this place. Because the disciples had fallen away, and filthily fled frō their master Christ, euery mā which fear did driue him: they did deserue like forsakers of their masters, or runnagates, to be deprived of honor. Therefore that we may knowe that by the appointment of the Lorde they were gathered together againe, and restored to their former degree: Luke reckoneth vp all their names.

Mat. 26. 56.

14 *Wish their wiues.* Some translate it, Women, and they think that he speaketh of those which accompanied Christ. As I will not contende with any man concerning this matter, so haue I not doubted to preferre that which I thought was more probable: I graunt that the word which Luke vseth, may be interpreted both wayes. But this is my reason, why I doe thinke that he speaketh rather of wiues: because seeing that they vsed afterward to carrie their wiues about with them, as Paul doth testifie it is not likely that they were then asunder: For they might more easilie rest together in one place, thā by wandering too & too oftentimes to change their abiding: and secondly, seeing that they did look for the coming of the holy ghost, which was then then at hande, what reason was there, why they should deprive their wiues of so great goodnesse?

1. Cor. 9. 5.

8. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Peter

Peter his wife was about to bee a helper vnto him shortly after: which wee must also thinke of the rest of the wiues. These women had nede of heroicall fortitude and constancie, least they should faint. Who would therefore thinke that they were excluded from their husbands, whiles they looke for the comming of the Spirite? But if they will sticke to the generall worde, it standeth with reason, that there were married women in the companie. Howsoeuer it bee, it is Luke his minde to tell vs by the way how greatly they had chaunged their mindes. For whereas before the men being afraid, had fled away, the women are gathered together with them now: neither doe they feare any daunger. Hee doeth reckon vp the mother of Iesus with the other women, whome notwithstanding Iohn is said to haue kept at his owne house. But as I haue saide before, they met altogether nowe onely for a short season. For it is not to bee doubted but that they departed one from another afterwarde. It is well knowne that amongst the Hebrewes, all kinsfolke are comprehended vnder this worde: brethren.

All these did continue. Heere hee sheweth that they did diligentlie looke for the comming of the holy Spirite. For this was the cause of their Prayer, that Christe would sende his Spirite, as hee had promised. Whereuppon wee may gather, that that is the true faith, which stirreth vs vp to call vppon God. For the securitie of faith doth muche differ from sluggishnesse. Neither doeth God therefore assure vs of this grace, that our mindes may straight way become carelesse: but that hee may rather sharpen our desire to pray. Neither is prayer any signe of doubting, but rather a testimonie of our sure hope and confidence: because wee aske those things at the Lorde his handes, which we know he hath promised. So it becommeth vs also (after their example) to bee instant in prayer, and to begge at Gods handes that he will increase in vs his holy Spirite: increase (I say) because before wee can conceiue any prayer, we must needes haue the first frutes of the Spirite. For as much as hee is the onely master, which teacheth vs to pray aright, who doeth not onely giue vs vtterance, but also gouerne our inwarde affections. Rom. 2.25.

Furthermore, Luke doth expresse two things which are proper to true prayer: namely that they did persist, and that they were all of one mind. This was an exercise of their patience, in that Christe did make them stay a while, when as hee could straightway haue sent the holy Spirite. So God doth oftentimes driue off, and as it were suffer vs to languishe, that he may accustome vs to perseuere. The hastinesse of our petitions is a corrupt, yea a hurtfull plague, wherefore it is no maruell if God doe sometime correct the same. In the meane season (as I haue said) he doth exercise vs to be constant in prayer. Therefore if wee will not pray in vaine, let vs not be wearied with the delay of time. As touching the vnitie of their mindes, it is set against that scattering abroad, which feare had caused before. yet notwithstanding we may easily gather, euen by this, how needfull a thing it is to praie generally, in that Christ commaundeth euerie one to pray for the whole bodie, and generally for all men, as it were in the person of all men: Our Father, Giue vs this day, &c. Whence commeth this vnitie of their tongues, but from one Spirite? Mat. 6.9.

Rom. 15. 6. rite? Wherefore when Paule woulde prescribe vnto the Iewes and Gentiles a right fourme of prayer: hee remoueth farre away all diuision and dissention. That wee may (saith hee) beeing all of one minde, with one mouth glorifie God. And truelie, it is needefull that wee bee brethren, and agree together like brethren; that we rightly call God Father.

15 In those dayes Peter standing vp in the midst of the disciples, saide (and the companie of names together, was almost an hundred and twentie.)

16 Men and brethren, it was expedient that this scripture shoulde be fulfilled; which the holie Ghost foretold by the mouth of Dauid, concerning Iudas which was guide vnto them which tooke Iesus:

* Lot 17 Which was adopted into the number of vs, and had obtained " part of this ministerie,

" Or got- 18 (And hee truelie hath " possessed a field with the rewarde of iniquitie, and
cen. beeing hanged, hee burst in sunder in the middle, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 And this was knowne vnto all the inhabitants of Ierusalem, so that that field is called in their tongue Hacheldima, that is, the field of blood.)

20 For it is written in the booke of the Psalmes, Let his habitation bee voided, and let there bee none to dwell therein, and let another man take his bishop-
like.

21 Of all those therefore, which were gathered together with vs all that time, wherein the Lorde Iesus went in and out amongst vs,

22 Beginning from the baptisme of Iohn vntill that day wherein he was taken vppe from vs, must one bee made a witnesse together with vs of his resurrection.

15 It was meete that Matthias should be chosen into the place of Iudas, least through the treacherie of one man, all that might seeme to haue been made of none effect, which Christe had once appointed. Hee did not vnaduisedly choose the twelue in the beginning, as principall Preachers of his Gospel. For when he saith that they should be iudges of Luke. 6. 13. twelve tribes of Israel, he sheweth heere, that it was done of set purpose John. 6. 70. that they might gather together the tribes of Israel vnto one faith: But after that the Iewes had refused the grace offered vnto them, it was behouefull that the Israel of God shoulde be gathered together out of all countries.

This therefore was as it were a holie number, which if it should haue beene diminished through the wickednesse of Iudas, then should the preaching of the Gospel, both haue had, and also haue lesse credite at this day: if the beginning thereof had beene vnperfect. Although therefore Iudas woulde (as much as in him lay) haue disappointed the purpose of Christe, yet neuerthelesse it stood firme and stable. He perished as he was worthy: yet did the order of the apostles remain whole and sound.

The companie of names. It is vncertaine whether he meaneth the men who

who only haue the name properly, seeing the women are comprehended vnder the name of the men: or whether he taketh names simple, for all the heads, as the Hebrewes call them soules. This may also bee called in question, whether they were wont dailie to frequent that parlour, in which the Apostles did dwell, or they did continually dwell there wyth them. For the place was scarce able to containe so great a multitude, to serue them for all necessarie vses. Surely it seemeth to me a thung more like to bee true, that Luke doth in this place expresse the number of them, that we may knowe that they were all gathered together, when Peter made this Sermon. Whereby wee may gesse, that they were not alwayes present there. Although I dare not affirme any certaine thing concerning this matter, yet being mooued with a probable coniecture, I doe rather leane vnto this part, that the Church was gathered together then, because they had to intreat of a serious matter, and to this end also tendeth this worde *rising*.

16 *It was meete that the scripture should be fulfilled.* Because Peter doth speake in this their assemblie, therefore the Papists will haue hym to bee the head of the church. As though no man might speake in anie assembly of the godly, but he should straightway bee Pope. We doe graunt, that as in euery assembly there must be some which must bee chiefe: so in this assembly the Apostles did ascribe this honour vnto Peter. But what maketh this vnto the proouing of their Papacie? Wherefore bydding them adue, let vs consider what the Spirite doth speake by the mouth of Peter. Hee saith, That the Scripture must needs haue been fulfilled, least any mans minde should bee troubled with that horrible fall of Iudas. For it seemed a straunge thing, that hee which was chosen by Christe vnto so excellent a function, should so filthilie fall in the beginning of his course. Peter remooueth this stone of stumbling, when he saith, that it was foretolde by the scripture. Whence we may gather an admonition very necessarie for dailie practise: namely that wee ought to attribute this honour vnto the Prophetes of the scriptures, that they are able to appease all such feare as wee conceiue of the so-daine euent of things. For there is nothing which doeth more trouble vs, then when we stay still in our owne sense and vnderstanding, and procure vnto our selues lets & doubts, which the Lord would be readie to cure, if so be that we woulde hold fast this one thing, that nothing is absurde which he hath foreseene, appointed, and foretolde that hee might make vs more strong. Neither was Iudas therefore excusable because that which befell him was foretolde, seeing that he fell away, not being compelled by the Prophetie, but onely by the malice of his owne heart. The oration of Peter hath two parts. For in the first place he putteth away the offence, which godlie mindes might haue conceiued, by reason of the fall of Iudas: whence also he gathereth an exhortation, that the rest may learne to feare God. Secondly, he telleth them that it remaineth that they choose an other into his place, both which hee proueth by testimonie of Scripture,

Which the holy Ghost foretold. Such manner of speeches bring greater reuerence to the scriptures, whiles wee are taught by them, that Dauid and all the rest of the prophetes did speake only as they were directed by the holy Ghost: so that they them selues were not the authours of their prophesies, but the Spirite which vsed their tongues as an instrument. Wherefore seeing that our dulnesse is so great, that wee ascribe lesse authoritie vnto the scriptures than wee ought: wee must diligently note such manner of speeches, & acquaint our selues with them, that we may oftentimes remember the authoritie of God to confirme our faith withall.

17 *Adopted.* It is worde for word Reckoned. And he saith that he was one of the number, that he might signifie vnto them, that it was needfull that the emptie place shoulde bee filled, to the ende that the number might continue whole. And to this purpose serueth that which foloweth, that hee had obtained a part in the ministerie. For thereupon it doth folow, that the body should be as it were lame, if that part should be wanting. Surely it was a thing which might make them greatly amased, that he whom Christ had extolled vnto so high dignitie, should fall headlong into such destruction. Which circumstance doeth increase the crueltie of the fact, and teacheth the rest to take heed vnto themselves. Neither is it to be doubted, but that the disciples did remember Iudas with great griefe and sorrow. But Peter doth here expresse by name the excellencie of his function, that he might make them more attentue & more carefull to provide a remedie.

18 *And he truly.* It seemeth vnto mee a thing like to bee true, that this narration of the death of Iudas was put in by Luke: therefore it seemed good to me to include it within a Parenthesis, that it may be separated from Peter his Sermon. For to what ende shoulde Peter heere reckon vp vnto the Disciples those things which they alreadie knew well enough?

Secondly, it should haue been an absurd thing to haue spoken after this among them, that the field which was bought with the money that was giuen to betray Christe, was called of the Hebrewes in their owne mother tongue *Acheldima*. But whereas some doe answere that Peter spoke this vnto the Galileans, whose speech did disagree with the Iewish tongue, it is but vaine and frivolous. In very deede they did somewhat disagree in pronounciation: yet not so much, but that they did well vnderstand one another: like as doe those of Paris and the men of Roan.

Furthermore howe coulde this bee a fit worde for Ierusalem, where Peter made his sermon? To what end should hee interpret in Greeke among the Hebrewes, their owne mother tongue? Therefore doth Luke of himself put in this sentence concerning the death of Iudas, least Peter his wordes might seeme straunge through ignorance of that historie.

He possessed a field. This word hath a double signification, which in my opinion doth rather signifie in this place to possesse, than to get: yet because it skilleth little whether way wee reade it, I leaue it indifferent.

And

And hee speaketh after this sort, not because Judas had the vse of the field, or that he himself did buie it, seeing it was bought after his death. But Luke his meaning was, that his buriall with the perpetuall note of ignominie, was the reward which he had for his fallhood & wicked act, Neither did hee so much sel Christ for thirtie pence, as his Apostleship. Hee enioyed not the money: he only possessed the fiede. Furthermore it came to passe through the marueilous prouidence of god, that the verie common name of the fiede should bee a note of infamie for the Priestes, which had bought the innocent blood, of the Traitor. Hee sayeth that the Hebrewes did call it by that name in their tongue, because hee himselve was a Grecian borne; And hee calleth that the Hebrew tongue, which the Iewes did vse after the captiuitie of Babylon; namely, suche as was mixed of the Assyrians tongue and of the Chaldeans tongue.

It is written in the booke of Psalmes. He taketh away by authoritie of Scriptures, all offence which might haue happened by reason of the falling away of Iudas. Yet might this place seeme to bee greatlie wreaisted: First in that Dauid did not wishe that these things might befall any particular person, but (in the plurall number) hee wisheth them vnto his enemies. Secondly, it seemeth that Peter doeth applie these things amisse vnto Iudas, which were spoken of the enemies of Dauid. I answere that Dauid doth there speake after this sort of him selfe, that hee may describe the condition and state of Christe his kingdome.

In that Psalme (I say) is contained the common image of the whole church; which is the bodie of the Sonne of God. Therefore the things which are there set down must needs haue been fulfilled in the head, which are indeed fulfilled, as the Euangelists do testifie. Now if any man obiect that those things which ther were spoken against the enemies of Dauid, do not fitly agree vnto Iudas: we may easily gather, that they do so much the rather agree with him, because Dauid doth not respect himselfe as being separated fro the body of the church: but rather as he was one of the members of Christ, and so taking vpon him his image, he stepeth foorth in his name.

Whosoever shall marke that this singular person was attributed vnto Dauid, that he should be a figure of Christe, will not maruell if all these things be applied vnto him, which were prefigured in Dauid. Although therefore he doth comprehend the whole church, yet he beginneth at the head thereof, & doth especially describe what things Christ should suffer by the hands of the wicked. For we learne out of Paule his doctrine, that whatsoeuer afflictions the godlie suffer, they are part of the afflictions of Christe, and serue to the fulfilling of the same. This order and connexion did Dauid obserue, or rather the Spirite of God, who meant by the mouth of Dauid to instruct the whole Church. But as touching the persecutors of Christ, all that which is commonly spoken of them; is by good right referred vnto their standard bearer: whose impietie and wickednesse, as it is most famous; so his punishment ought to be made knowne vnto all men. If any man doe obiect againe,

Col. 1. 24.

that that which is recited in the Psalm, is onely certaine cursings, and not propheties: and that therefore Peter doth gather improperly that it was of necessitie that it should be fulfilled, it is soone answered. For Dauid was not moued with any peruerse or corrupt affectiō of the flesh, to craue vengeance: but he had the holy Spirite to be his guide and director. Therefore what things soeuer he prayed for there, being inspired with the holy Ghoste, they haue the same strength which propheties haue, because the Spirite doth require no other thing than that, which God hath determined with himselfe to performe, and will also promise vnto vs. But whereas Peter doth cite out of the scriptures two diuers testimonies: by the first is méant, that Iudas togeather with his name and familie should quite be extinguished, that his place might be emptie: the other, which he fetcheth out of the hundreth & ninth Psalme, tendeth to this end, that ther should be an other chosen to supply his place. These seem at the first to be contrarie: namely, a wast & habitation and succession. Yet because the Spirite saith, onely in the former place, that the aduersaries of the Church should bee taken away, that their place might bee emptie, and without one to dwell therein, in respect of themselves: this is no let why another may not afterward supply their emptie place. Yea this doth also augment their punishment, in that the honor, after it is taken from him that was vnworthie thereof, is given to another.

And his bishopricke. The Hebrew wordes coulde not bee translated more fully. For *Pseudab* doeth signifie a iurisdiction or gouernment, so called of the ouerseeing, & beholding of things. For as for those which interpret it *Wife*, the text refuteth them. For it followeth in the next verse, of his wife, That she may be made a widow. Therefore after that he hath wished that the wicked may bee deprived of his life, hee addeth moreouer, that he may be spoyled of his honour: neither doth hee stay here, but also he desireth that another may succede him, whereby as I haue said before, his punishment is doubled. In the meane while he noteth by the way that this false traitor & wicked person wherof he speaketh, should not bee some one of the common sort, but such an one as should be indued with honour and dignitie: from which neuertheless he shall fall. And out of this place must wee learne, that the wicked shall not escape scot free, which haue persecuted the church of God. For this miserable and wretched end is prepared for them all.

21 *We must therefore.* This which hee bringeth in, might seeme at the first sight to be farre fet. For if so be it Dauid did speake of transposing Iudas his Bishopricke, it did not thereupon straightway follow that, the disciples shuld choose another to be his successor: yet because they knew that they had this charge given them to order the church, so soone as Peter had told them, that it did please the Lord that it should be so, hee gathereth thereupon, that they ought to doe it. For whensoever God will vs vs as meanes to maintaine the gouernment of his church, so soone as wee knowe what his wil is, wee must not linger, but stoutly perseuer whatsoeuer is required in our ministerie & function. That was without all controuersie, what was the duetie of the Church. Like

as at this day, when we heare that those must bee put from their office which behaue themselues vngodlic, and wickedly, and that other must be chosen in their roomes; the church must take this charge in hande. Wherefore it was superfluous to moue any question about a thing that was not to be doubted of. Therefore let vs alway remember to consider what we haue to doe, that we may be readie to obey the Lorde. Furthermore, when as he intreateth of the making of an Apostle, he saith hee must be a witness of the resurrection. Which signifieth, that the Apostleship is not without the preaching of the Gospel. Whence it may appeare howe vaine and friuolous the Popes bishops are, which hauing on onely dumbe visors, bragge that they are the successors of the Apostles. But wherein are they like vnto them? I graunt that Peter doeth here require such a witness, as sawe the Lorde after his resurrection, of which sort Iohn doth professe himselfe to be one, when he sayeth, Hee which saw it, beareth witness. For this did serue for the confirmation of faith: yet neuertheless Peter maketh it a thing necessarie in him and the rest of his fellowes in office, that they should teach, while hee maketh them and himselfe preachers or witnesses of the resurrection.

Iohn. 19. 35

Hee nameth the resurrection, not because they must beare witness thereof alone: but because first vnder this is comprehended the preaching of the death of Christe: secondly, because wee haue the ende of our redemption therein, and the accomplishment thereof, and also it bringeth with it the celestially gouernment of Christe, and the power of the Spirit in defending his, in establishing iustice & equitie, in restoring order, in abolishing the tyrannie of sinne, and in putting to flight all the enemies of the church. Let vs know therefore that those things are not excluded by this worde, which are necessarie knit together. Neuertheless, let vs note that the resurrection is heere named before other things, as beeing the chiefe point of the Gospell, as also Paule teacheth.

1. Cor. 15, 17.

But, were the Apostles alone witnesses of the resurrection? Was not this also common to the rest of the disciples? For Peter seemeth to challenge this as proper onely to the Apostles. I answered that this title is therefore attributed vnto the: because they were chosen peculiarly vnto that function, and because they had the chiefe roume amongst those which did bring this ambassage: therefore though they were the chief of those which were assigned: yet were not they onely appoynted there.

All that time. Hee beginneth at that time when Iesus beganne to shewe himselfe vnto the worlde. Which is diligently to bee observed, as before I haue saide. For he liued priuately vntill such time as hee was almost thirtie yeeres of age. For hee would not make himselfe knowne further, than was needfull for our saluation. Therefore when the time was come wherein he must go about that businesse which his Father had appointed him: hee came abroad like a sheewe man; and one that was but lately borne. Euerie man may easily perceiue what great force this

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hath to bridle our curiositie. The whole life of Christe might haue beene a mirrour most marueilous of more than absolute perfection: and yet notwithstanding that hee might keepe vs occupied in the studie & meditation of those things which were most needfull to bee knowne, he would leade the better part of his life obscurelie and in secret. Who dare now wander without Christ, seeing that hee doth applie the knowledge of himselfe to the edifying of faith.

John. 10. 9.

The Hebrewes take this, to goe in and out, for to bee conuersant and to leade the life among men. In which sense citizens are saide to goe in and out, by the gates of their citie. So Iohn 10. 9: if any man enter in by mee, hee shall goe in and out, and shall finde pasture. Although in the seconde booke of the Chronicles, the first chapter, and tenth verse, it seemeth to bee a token of rule and gouernment.

23 Then they presented two, Ioseph, whose surname was Barsabas, which was called Iustus, and Matthias.

24 And when they had prayed, they said, Thon Lorde which knowest the hearts of men, shew wether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take the roome of this ministerie and apostleship, from which Iudas is fallen, that he might goe vnto his place.

26 And they gaue in their lots, and the lot fell vpon Matthias: and he was by common consent counted with the eleuen Apostles.

230 They were to choose one only into the roome of Iudas: they presented two. Here may a question be asked; Why they were not contented with one onely? Was it because they were so like, that they could not discern whether was more fit? This truly had bene no sufficient reason why they should suffer it to be decided by lottes. And also it seemeth that Ioseph was of greater estimation otherwise. Or was it because they were diuersly affectioned? But this seemeth scarce probable, neither is this to be admitted as true, because of that most excellent testimony which Luke did giue a little before of their vnity and agreement. Lastly, it had bene very absurde for them to haue polluted the election of the Apostle with such strife and contention. But for this cause did they vse the casting of lots, that it might be knowne that Matthias was not onely chosen by the voices of men, but also that he was made by the determination and iudgement of God.

Galath. 1. 2. For there was this difference between the Apostles and the pastors: that the Pastors were chosen simply by the Church, the Apostles were called of God. In which respect Paul in the preface of his epistle to the Galathians, doth professe himselfe to be an Apostle, neither of men, neither made by man. Therefore like as the dignitie of this function was excellent: so was it meet that in the choosing of Matthias, the chiefe iudgement should be left vnto God; howsoeuer men did their duerie. Christ by his owne mouth did appoint the rest: therefore if Matthias had bene chosen onely by man, to be one of them, he should haue had lesse authoritie than they. This was verie orderly done, that the disci-

ples

ples should present vnto God those whom they thought to be the best, and he should choose to himselfe whom he knewe to be most fit. So that God by the fall of the lot, doth pronounce that he did allow of the Apostleship of Mathias. But the Apostles might seeme to haue delt very rashly & disorderly, which laid so great and waightie a matter vpon a lot. For what certaintie could they gather thereby? I answer, that they did it onely as they were moued thereunto by the holy spirite. For although Luke doth not expresse this: yet because he will not accuse the disciples of rashnes, but rather doth shewe that this election was lawfull and approved of God: I say therefore, that they went this way to worke, being moued by the spirite. Like as they were directed in all the action by the same Spirit. But whie doe they not praie that God would choose whom he would out of the whole multitude? Why do they restraine his iudgement vnto two? Is not this to rob God of his libertie, when as they tie him, and as it were make him subiect vnto their voices and consents? But whosoever shall quietlie ponder the matter, shall plainlie perceiue by the drift of Luke, that the disciples durst do nothing, but that which they knew was their dutie to doe, & was commanded them by the Lord. As for the contentions, let them goe shake their eares.

24 *In praying they said.* Word for word it is, Hauing praied, they faied. But there is no obscuritie in the sense: because his meaning was to speake as followeth, that they prayed. And yet hee doth not reckon vp all the wordes, being content briefly to shew the summe. Therefore although they were both of honest conuersation, yea although they did excell in holinesse and other vertues: yet because the integritie of the heart, whereof God is the alone knower and iudge, is the chiefe, the disciples pray, that God would bring that to light which was hidden from men. The same ought to bee required euen at this day in choosing Pastours. For howsoever we are not to appoint two for one, yet because we may oftentimes be deceiued, & the discerning of spirites cometh of the Lorde, we must alwayes pray vnto God, that he will shewe vnto vs what men he will haue to be ministers, that he may direct and gouerne our purposes. Here we may also gather what great regard wee must haue of integritie & innocencie in choosing Pastours, without which both learning and eloquence, & what excellencie soeuer can bee inuented, are as nothing.

26 *They gaue in their lots.* We wil not in this place make any long disputation about lots. Those men who thinke it to be wickednesse to cast lots at all, offend partly through ignorance, & partly they vnderstand not the force of this word. There is nothing which men do not corrupt with their boldnes and vanitie. Whereby it is come to passe that they haue brought lots into great abuse and superstition. For that diuination of coniecture which is made by lots, is altogether diuclish. But when magistrates deuide prouinces amongst them, & brethren their inheritance, it is a thing lawfull. Which thing Solomon doth plainely testifie, when he maketh God the gouernour of the euent. The lots (saith he) are cast into the Bosome, and the iudgement of them cometh forth from the

Pro. 16.33.

Lord. This ordinance or custome is no more corrupt & depraued by corruption, than the corrupt vanitie of the Chaldeans doth corrupt true & naturall Astrologie. Whilest the Chaldeans go about with the name of Astrologie to cloake and colour their wicked curiositie, they defame a science both profitable and praiseworthy. The same do those which tell men their destinies (as they call them) by casting lots: but it is our dutie to discern the lawfull use from the corruption. Hee saith the lots were giuen, that being put into a pot, or one of their lappes, they might afterward be drawn out. And heere we must also note that this worde Lot is diuersly taken in this place. For when he said before, that Iudas had obtained a lot of the ministerie, his meahing was (according to the common custome of the scripture) that hee had a portion giuen him of the Lord. Hee speaketh afterward properlie and without any figure of a lot. Yet is it likely, for as much as the worde *Goral* is commonly vsed by the Hebrewes for both thinges, that Peter meant to allude vnto that which they were about to doe: and that Luke had respect vnto the selfe same thing,

Of the ministerie and Apostleship. Because the word Ministry was base, he addeth Apostleship, wherein there is greater dignitie. Although the sense shall be more plaine if you expound it, The ministerie of the Apostleship. For the figure Hypallage is common in the Scriptures. Assuredly Luke meant to ioine with the burden, the excellencie of the office, that it might haue the greater reuerence and authoritie: and yet this was his intent also, to declare that the Apostles are called vnto a painefull function.

The lot fell vpon Matthias. It came to passe as no man would haue looked for: for we may gather by that which goeth before, that there was not so great account made of Matthias, as of the other: For besides that Luke gaue him the former place, the two surnames which Barsabas had, do shew that he was in great estimation. Hee was called Barsabas, that is the sonne of an oath, or of rest, of the thing it selfe, as if he were some mirror either of faithfulness and innocencie, or of a quiet and modest nature. The other surname did import singular honesty. This man therefore in mens iudgement was the former: but God did preferre Matthias before him, Whereby we are taught, that we must not glory if we be extolled vnto the skies in the opinion of men, & if by their voices & consents, we be iudged to be most excellent men: but we must rather haue regard of this, to approue our selues vnto God, who alone is the most lawfull and iust iudge, by whose sentence and iudgement wee stande or fall. And we may oftentimes marke this also: that God passeth over him which is the chiefe in the sight of men, that hee may throw downe all pride which is in man; In that he addeth, that he was reckoned amongst the rest, he wipeth away all sinister note of rashnes from the casting of lots: because the Church did embrace him as chosen by God, on whom the lot fell.

CHAP. II.

- 1 **A**ND when the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all with one accord gathered together:
- 2 And there was made from heauen suddainlie a sounde, as it were when a violent wind breaketh in, and it filled all the house where they sate:
- 3 And they saw clouen tongues as it were of fire, and it sate vppon euerie one of them.
- 4 And they were all filled with the holy Ghost, and they began to speake with strange tongues, euen as the spirite gaue them to speake.

1 And when. To be fulfilled is taken in this place for to Come. For Luke beareth recorde againe of their perseuerance, when he saith that they stode al in one place vntil the time which was set them. Hereunto serueth the aduerbe *with one accord*. Furthermore we haue before declared why the Lord did defer the sending of his spirit a whole moneth and one halfe. But the question is why he sent him vppon that daie chiefly. I will not refuse that high and subtile interpretation of Augustine, that like as the lawe was giuen to the olde people fiftie dayes after Easter, being written in tables of Stone, by the hande of God: so the Spirit, whose office it is to write the same in our hearts, did fulfill that which was figured in the giuing of the law, as many daies after the resurrection of Christ, who is the true passcouer. Notwithstanding whereas he vrgeth this his subtile interpretation as necessaric, in his booke of Questions vpon Exodus, and in his second Epistle vnto Ianuaris, I would with him to be more sober and modest therein. Notwithstanding let him keepe his own interpretation to himselfe. In the meane season, I will embrace that which is more sounde: vppon the feast day, wherein a great multitude was wont to resort to Ierusalem, was this miracle wrought, that it might bee more famous. And truely by meanes hereof was it spread abroad, euen vnto the vttermost partes and borders of the earth. For the same purpose did Christ oftentimes go vp to Ierusalem vppon the holy daies, to the ende those miracles which hee wrought, might be knowne to manie: and that in the greater assemblie of people, there might be the greater fruite of his doctrine. For so will Luke afterward declare, that Paul made hast that he might come to Ierusalem before the day of Pentecost, not for any religions sake, but because of the greater assemblie, that he might profite the more. Therefore in making choise of the day, the profite of the miracle was respected: First that it might be the more extolled at Ierusalem, because the Iewes were then more bent to consider the workes of God: and secondly that it might be bruted abroad, euen in farre countries. They called it the fiftith day, beginning to reckon at the first frutes.

2 And there was made. It was requisite that the gift shoulde be visible, that the bodily sense might the more stirre vp the disciples. For such is our slothfulnesse to consider the giftes of God, that vnlesse he awake al our senses, his power shall passe away vnknowne. This was therefore a preparation that they might the better know that the Spirit was nowe come,

John. 2. 5. 7.
10. 12.

Acts. 20. 16.

come, which Christ had promised. Although it was not so much for their sakes, as for ours: euen as in that the clouen and fire tongues appeared, there was rather respect had of vs, and of all the whole Church, in that, than of them. For God was able to haue furnished them with necessarie habilitie to preach the Gospel, although he should vse no signe. They themselues might haue knowne, that it came to passe neither by chance, neither yet through their owne industrie, that they were so suddenly chaunged: but those signes which are here set downe were about to bee profitable for all ages, as we perceiue at this day, that they profite vs. And we must briefly note the proportion of the signes. The violence of the wind did serue to make them afraid. For we are neuer rightly prepared to receiue the grace of God, vnlesse the confidence and boldnes of the flesh be tamed. For as we haue accesse vnto him by faith, so humilitie and feare setteth open the gate, that he may come in vnto vs. He hath nothing to do with proude and carelesse men. It is a common thing for the spirit to be signified by wind, or a blast. For both Christ himself, when he was about to giue the Spirit to his Apostles, did breath vpon them. And in Ezechiel his vision there was a whirlwind & wind. Yea, the word Spirit it selfe is a translated worde: For, because that hypostacie or person of the diuine essence, which is called the Spirit, is of it selfe incomprehensible, the scripture doeth borrowe the worde of the winde or blast: because it is the power of God, which God doth poure into all creatures, as it were by breathing. The shape of tongues is restrained vnto the present circumstance. For as the figure and shape of a Doue which came downe vpon Christ, had a signification agreeable to the office and nature of Christ: so God did now make choise of a signe which might be agreeable to the thing signified: namely, that it might shew such effect and working of the holy Ghost in the Apostles, as followed afterward. The diuersity of tongues did hinder the gospel from being spread abroad any farther. So that if the preachers of the Gospel had spoken one language onely, all men would haue thought that Christ had bene shut vp in the small corner of Iurie: but God inuented a waie whereby it might breake out, when he diuided and cloued the tongues of the Apostles, that they might spread that abroad amongst all people, which was deliuered to them. Wherein appeareth the manifold goodnes of God: because a plague and punishment of mans pride was turned into matter of blessing. For whence came the diuersitie of tongues, saue onelie that the wicked and vngodly counsels of men might be brought to nought? But God doeth furnish the Apostles with the diuersitie of tongues now, that hee may bring and call home into a blessed vnitie, men which wander here and there. These clouen tongues made all men to speake the language of Canaan: as Isaias foretold. For what language soeuer they speake, yet doe they call vpon one Father, which is in heauen, with one mouth and one spirite. I saide that that was done for our sake, not onely because the fruit came vnto vs, but because we know that the Gospel came not vnto vs by chaunce, but by the appointment of God, who to this end gaue the Apostles clouen tongues, least anie nation

Iohn. 20. 22.

Ezech. 1. 4.

Iohn. 1. 32.

Gene. 11. 7.

Esai. 19. 18.

Rom. 15. 6.

on should want that doctrine which was committed vnto them. Whereby is prooued the calling of the Gentiles: and secondly heereby their doctrine doth purchase credite, which we know was not forged by man, seeing that we heare that the Spirite did dwell in their tongues. Now it remaineth that we declare what the *fire* meaneth. Without all doubt it was a token of the force and efficacie, which should be exercised in the voice of the Apostles. Otherwise, although their sounde had gone out into the vttermoſt parts of the world, they should only haue but the aire without doing any good at all. Therefore the Lord doth shew that their voice shalbe fire, that it may enflame the hearts of men; that the vanitie of the world being burnt and consumed, it may purge and renew all things. Otherwise they durst neuer haue taken vpon them so harde a function; vnlesse the Lord had assured them of the power of their preaching. Heereby it came to passe, that the doctrine of the Gospel did not onely sounde in the aire, but pearce into the minds of men, and did fill them with an heavenly heat and burning. Neither was this force shewed only in the mouth of the Apostles, but it appeareth daily. And therefore we must beware least when the fire burneth, wee be as stubble. Furthermore the Lorde did once giue the holy Ghost vnder a visibible shape, that we may assure our selues, that his inuisibible and hidden grace shall neuer be wanting to the Church.

And it ſate. Because the number is sodainly changed, it is to be doubted whether he speaketh of the fire. He saide that there appeared tongues, as it had bene of fire. It followeth by and by: And it ſate vpon them. Notwithstanding I refer it vnto the spirite. For the Hebrewes vse commonly to expresse the substantiue of the verbe in the seconde member, which they did omit in the former. Wherefore wee haue an example in this place: *It ſate* vpon them, and they were all filled with the holy Ghost. And we know that although Luke did write in Greeke, yet is hee full of those phraſes which the Hebrewes vse. Nowe whereas hee calleth the tongues, the holy Ghost, it is according to the custome of the Scripture. For Iohn calleth the Doue by the same name: because the Lord would testifie and declare the presence of his Spirite by some such signe. If it were a vaine signe, it should be an absurd naming, to cal the signe by the name of the thing signified: but where the thing is annexed, the name of the thing is fitly giuen to the signe, which offereth the same vnto our senses to be perceiued. The fulnes of the spirit, wherewith he saith euery one was replenished, doeth not expresse the equall measure of giftes in euery one, but that excellencie which shoulde be meete for such a calling.

Iohn. 1. 32.

4 *They began to ſpeake.* Hee sheweth that the effect did appeare presently, and also to what vse their tongues were to be framed & applied. But, because Luke setteth downe shortly after, that strangers out of diuers countries did maruell, because that euery one of them did heare the Apostles speaking in their owne tongue: some think that they spake not in diuers tongues, but that they did all vnderstande that which was spoken in one tonge, as wel as if they should heare their natural tongue.

There-

1. Cor. 14. 18

Therefore they thinke that one and the same sound of the voice was diuersly distributed amongst the hearers. An other coniecture they haue, because Peter made one sermon in the audience of many gathered together out of diuers countries: who could not vnderstand his speech and language, vnlesse an other voice should come vnto their eares, then that which proceeded out of his mouth. But we must first note, that the disciples spake in deede with strange tongues: otherwise the miracle had not bene wrought in them, but in the hearers. So that the similitude should haue bene false, whereof he made mention before: neither shoulde the Spirit haue bene giuen so much to them as to others. Again, we heare how Paul giueth thanks to God, that he speaketh with diuers tongues. Truly he chalengeth to himselfe both the vnderstanding, and also the vse thereof. Neither did he attaine to this skil by his owne study and industrie, but he had it by the gift of the Spirit. In the same place he affirmeth, that it is an especial gift, wherewith all men are not indued. I suppose that it doth manifestly appeare hereby, that the Apostles had the varietie & vnderstanding of tongues giuen them: that they might speak vnto the Greeks in Greeke, vnto the Italians in the Italian tongue, and that they might haue true communication and conference with their hearers. Notwithstanding I leaue it indifferent, whether there was any second miracle wrought or no, so that the Ægyptians and Elamites did vnderstand Peter speaking in the Chaldean tongue, as if he did vtter diuers voices. For there be some coniectures which perswade me thus to thinke, and yet not so firme, but that they may be refuted. For it may be that they spake with diuers tongs, as they light vppon this man or that, and as occasion was offered, & as their languages were diuers. Therefore it was a manifest miracle, when they saw them readie to speake diuerse languages. As touching Peter his sermon, it might be vnderstood of the more part of men wheresoeuer they were borne: For it is to be thought that many of those which came to Ierusalem were skilful in the Chaldean tongue. Again, it shalbe nothing inconuenient, if we say that he spake also in other tongues. Although I will not much stand about this matter so that this be out of doubt, that the Apostles changed their speech.

- 5 And there were at Ierusalem Iewes abiding, godlie men out of every nation of those which are vnder heauen.
- 6 And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and was astonied: because euery one heard them speake in his owne tongue.
- 7 And they wondered all, and marvelled, saying amongst themselves, Beholde, are not all these which speake, men of Galilee?
- 8 And how do we euery one heare them speaking in his owne language, wherein we were borne?
- 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Iudea, and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia,
- 10 And of Phrygia and Pamphilia, of Ægypt, and of the parts of Lybia towards Cyren, and strangers of Rome.

II Iewes

- 11 *Iewes and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, wee heare them speaking in their owne tongues, the wonderfull workes of God.*
- 12 *Therefore they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another: what meaneth this? Others mocking said: they are full of sweete wine.*

5 *And there were at Ierusalem.* When he calleth them *godlie or religious men*, hee seemeth to giue vs to vnderstande that they came to Ierusalem that they might worship God: like as God in all ages after the scattering abroad, did gather together into that Citie some seede which remained, hauing as is were set vp his banner: because as yet the Temple did serue to some vse: yet neuerthelesse hee sheweth by the way, who those be which profite by those miracles, whereby God doth declare his power. For wicked and profane men, doe either laugh at them, or else passe not for them, as we shall see by and by. Furthermore he meant to cite those as witnesses, which may the better be beleued for their religion and godlinesse. When he said, *out of euerie nation*, he meaneth out of diuerse Countries, whereof one is farre from another. For he doth also afterwarde reckon vp those lands whereof one was farre distant from another, of which sort are Lybia and Pontus, Rome and Parthia, and Arabia and such like. This serueth to encrease the greatnesse of the thing: For the Cretians and men of Asia, dwelling so neere together, might haue some likelyhood and agreement in speech: but the same could not bee betwixt the Italians and the men of Cappadocia, betwixt the Arabians, and those of Pontus. Yea, this was also a worke of God worthie to be remembred, and wondered at, that in so huge and horrible a scattering abroad of the people, hee did alwayes reserue some reliques, yea he caused certaine straungers to adioyne themselves vnto a people which was in such miserie and as it were quite destroyed. For although they liued heere and there in exile in farre countries, and being one, farre from another, did as it were inhabite diuerse worldes, yet did they hold among themselves the vnitie of faith. Neither doth he call them vnadvisedly and without good consideration godly men and men fearing God.

6 *When this was noysed abroad.* Luke saith thus in Greeke, This voice being made, but his meaning is that the fame was spread abroad, whereby it came to passe that a great multitude came together. For if one after another in diuerse places, and at diuerse times had heard the Apostles speaking in diuerse tongues, the miracle had not beene so famous. Therefore they come all together into one place, that the diuersitie of tongues may the better appeare by the present comparison. There is a further circumstance also heere to bee noted, that the Countie and natie soyle of the Apostles was commonly knowne, and this was also commonlie knowne that they neuer went out of their Countie, to learne straunge tongues. Therefore forasmuch as one speaketh Latine, another Greeke, another the Arabian tongue, as occasion was offered, and that indifferentlie, and euerie one doth also change

change his tongue, the worke of God appeareth more plainlie hereby.

11 *The wonderfull workes of God.* Luke noteth two things which caused the hearers to wonder: first, because the Apostles being before ignorant and priuate persons, borne in a base corner, did notwithstanding intreat profoundly of diuine matters, and of heauenly wisdom. The other is, because they haue new tongues giuen them sodainly. Both things are worth the noting, because to huddle out words vnaduisedly and foolishly, should not so much haue serued to moue their minds, & the maiestie of the things ought the more to haue moued them to consider the miracle. Although they giue due honor to God, in that that they are astonished and amased: yet the principall fruite of the miracle is expressed, in this that they enquire: and thereby declare that they are prepared to learne: for otherwise their amasednes and wondering should not haue done them any great good. And certainly we must so wonder at the workes of God, that there must bee also a consideration, and a desire to vnderstand.

12 *Others mocking.* Hereby it appeareth howe monstrous as well the sluggishnes, as also the vngodlines of men is, when Satan hath taken away their minde. If God should openly and visiblie descend from heauen, his maiestie could scarce more manifestly appeare, than in this miracle. Whosoeuer hath any drop of sound vnderstanding in him, must needs be stricken with the onely hearing of it. How beastly then are those men, who see it with their eies, and yet scoffe? and goe about with their iests to mocke the power of God? But the matter is so. There is nothing so wonderfull, which those men do not turne to a iest, who are touched with no care of God: because they doe euen vpon set purpose, harden themselues in their ignorance, in things most plaine. And it is a iust punishment of God, which he bringeth vpon such pride: to deliuer them to Satan to be driuen headlong into blind furie. Wherefore there is no cause why we should marueile, that there be so many at this day so blind in so great light, if they be so deafe when such manifest doctrine is deliuered, yea if they watonly refuse saluation when it is offered vnto them. For if the wonderfull and strange workes of God wherein he doth wonderfully set forth his power, be subiect to the mockes of men: what shall become of doctrine, which they thinke tasteth of nothing; but of that which is common? Although Luke doth signifie vnto vs that they were not of the worst sort, or altogether past hope, which did laugh & mocke: but he meant rather to declare how the comon sort was affected when they saw this miracle. And truely it hath bene alwaies so in the worlde, for verie fewe haue bene touched with the true feeling of God, as often as he hath reuealed himselfe. Neither is it any maruel: for religion is a rare vertue, and a vertue which few men haue: which is in deede the beginning of vnderstanding. Neuerthelessse howsoeuer the more part of men through a certaine hard stifneckednes, doth reject the consideration of the workes of God, yet are they neuer without fruite. As we may see in this historie.

- 14 But Peter standing with the eleuen, lift vp his voice, and spake vnto them,
 Yee men of Iudea, and all yee which dwell at Ierusalem, let this be knowne vnto
 you, and with your eares heare my words.
- 15 For these men are not drunke, as yee suppose: for it is the third houre of the
 day.
- 16 But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Ioel:
- 17 And it shall be in the last dayes, saith God, I will poure out of my Spirit
 vpon all flesh, and your sonnes, and your daughters shall prophesie, and your
 young men shall see visions, and your Elders shall dreame dreames:
- 18 Verely I will poure out of my Spirit in those dayes vpon my seruants, and vpon
 mine handmaids, and they shall prophesie.
- 19 And I will shew wonders in heauen aboue, & signes vpon the earth beneath,
 blood and fire, and the vapour of smoke:
- 20 The sunne shall be turned into darknes, and the moone into blood, before the
 great and notable day of the Lord do come.
- 21 And it shall come to passe, that whosoener shall call vpon the name of the
 Lord, he shall be saued.

14 And Peter standing. By this worde Standing, hee did signifie that there was a graue sermon made in the assemblie. For they did rise when they spake vnto the people, to the ende they might be the better heard. The summe of this Sermon is this: hee gathereth that Christ is already reuealed and giuen by the giste of the holy Ghost, which they sawe. Yet first hee refuteth that false opinion, in that they thought that the disciples were drunke. This refutation consisteth vpon a probable argument: because men vse not to bee drunke betimes in the morning. For as Paule saith, Those which are drunke, are drunke in the night. For they flie the light for shame. And surely so great is the filthinesse of this vice, that for good causes it hateth the light. And yet this argument were not alwayes good. For Iesaias doeth inuicigh in his time against those, which did rise earlie to followe drunkennesse. And at this day there be manie, who like hogges, so soone as they awake, runne to quaffing, But because this is a common custome amongst men, Peter saith, that it is no likelie thing. Those which haue but euen small skill in antiquitie, doe knowe that the ciuill day, from the rising of the Sunne vntill the going downe thereof, was diuided into twelue houres. So that the houres were longer in sommer, and shorter in winter. Therefore that which shoulde now be the ninth before noone in winter, and in somer the eight, was the thirde houre amongst the olde people. Therefore, whereas Peter doeth onely lightlie remouee the opinion of drunkennesse, hee doeth it for this cause, because it had bene superfluous to haue stooode about any long excuse. Therefore, as in a matter which was certaine and out of doubt, hee doeth rather pacifie those which mocked; than labour to teach them. And hee doeth not so much refute them by the circumstance of time, as by the testimonie of Ioel. For when hee saith that that is now come to passe, which was foretolde, hee toucheth briefly their vnthankfulness,

1. Thes. 5. 6.

because they doe not acknowledge such an excellent benefite promised vnto them in times past, which they nowe see with their eyes. And whereas hee ypbraideth the fault of a fewe vnto all; hee doeth it not to this ende, that he may make them all guiltie of the same fault: but because a fit occasion was offered by their mocking to teach them all together, he doth not for-slow the same.

Ioel 2. 29. 17 *It shall be in the last dayes.* By this effect he prooueth that the Messias is alreadie reuealed. Ioel in deede doth not expresse the last dayes: but for as much as he entreateth of the perfect restoring of the Church, it is not to bee doubted but that that propheticke belongeth vnto the last age alone. Wherefore that which Peter bringeth, doeth no whit dissent from Ioel his meaning: but he doth onely adde this word for expositions sake, that the Iewes might knowe, that the Church could by no other meanes be restored, which was then decayed, but by being renewed by the Spirit of God. Againe, because the repairing of the Church, should be like vnto a new world, therefore Peter saith that it shall bee in the last dayes. And surelie this was a common and familiar thing among the Iewes, that all those great promises concerning the blessed and well ordered state of the Church, shoulde not bee fulfilled, vntill Christ by his comming shoulde restore all thinges. Wherefore it was out of all doubt amongst them, that that which is cited out of Ioel, doth appertaine vnto the last time. Nowe by the last dayes or fulnesse of time is meant the stable and firme condition of the Church in the manifestation or reuealing of Christ.

I will powre out of my Spirit. Hee intendeth to prooue (as wee haue alreadie saide) that the Church can be repaired by none other meanes, sauing onely by the giuing of the holy Spirit. Therefore for as much as they did all hope, that the restoring drewe neere, hee accuseth them of sluggishnesse, because they doe not once thinke vpon the way, and meanes thereof. And when the Prophet saith, I wil powre out, it is without all question, that he meant by this worde to note the great abundance of the Spirit. And we must take, *I will powre out of my Spirit*, in the same sense, as if he had saide simplie, I will powre out my Spirit. For these latter wordes, are the wordes of the Prophet. But Peter followed the Grecians, who translate the Hebrew word *ruah*, *hupo*. Therefore some men doe in vaine more subtiltie play the Philosophers: because how soeuer the wordes be chaunged, yet must we still retaine and keepe the prophet his meaning. Neuertheles when God is said to powre out his Spirit, I confesse it must bee thus vnderstoode, that hee maketh manifold varietie and change of gifts to flowe vnto men from his Spirit, as it were out of the onely fountaine, the fountaine which can neuer bee drawne drie. For as Paule doeth testifie, there bee diuerse gifts, and yet but one Spirit. And hence doe wee gather a profitable doctrine, that wee can haue no more excellent thing giuen vs of God than the grace of the Spirit: yea that all other thinges are nothing woorth, if this bee wanting. For when God will briefelie promise sal-
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1. Cor. 12. 4.

uation to his people, hee affirmeth that hee will giue them his Spirit. Hereupon it followeth that we can obtaine no good things, vntill we haue the Spirit giuen vs. And truely it is as it were the key, which openeth vnto vs the doore, that we may enter into all the treasures of spirituall good things: and that wee may also haue entrance into the kingdome of God.

Vppon all fleshe. It appeareth by that which followeth, of what force this generalitie is. For first it is set downe generallie, All fleshe: after that the partition is added, whereby the Prophet doeth signifie that there shalbe no difference of age or kinde, but that God admitteth al, one with another vnto the partaking of his grace. It is said therefore *All fleshe*, because both younge and olde, men and women, are thereby signified. Yet heere may a question be mooued, why God doth promise that vnto his people, as some newe and vnwoonted good thing, which hee was wont to do for them from the beginning throughout all ages. For there was no age voide of the grace of the Spirit. The aunswere of this question is set downe in these two woordes, I will powre out, and, Vppon all fleshe. For wee must heere note a double contrarietie betweene the time of the olde, and newe Testament. For the powring out (as I haue saide) doeth signifie great plentie: when as there was vnder the Lawe a more scarce distribution. For which cause Iohn also doeth say that the holy Ghost was not giuen vntill Christ ascended into heauen. *All fleshe* doeth signifie an infinite multitude, where as God in times past did vouchsafe to bestowe such plentie of his spirit onely vpon a few.

Furthermore, in both comparisons wee doe not denie but that the Fathers vnder the Lawe, were partakers of the selfesame grace whereof wee are partakers; but the Lorde doeth shewe that wee are aboute them, as wee are in deede. I say, that all Godly men sithence the beginning of the worlde, were endewed with the same spirit of vnderstanding, of righteousnesse, and sanctification, wherewith the Lorde doeth at this daie illuminate and regenerate vs: but there were but a few which had the light of knowledge giuen them then, if they bee compared with the great multitude of the faithfull, which Christ did sodainlic gather together by his comming. Againe, their knowledge was but obscure and slender, and as it were couered with a veile, if it bee compared with that which wee haue at this daie out of the Gospell, where Christ the Sunne of righteousnesse doeth shine with perfect brightnesse, as it were at noone daie. Neither doeth that anie whittle hurt or hinder, that a fewe had such an excellent faith, that peraduenture they haue no equall at this day. For their vnderstanding did neuerthelesse smell, or sauour of the instruction and Schoolemaistershippe of the Lawe. For that is alwayes true, that godlie kings and Prophetes haue not seene, nor hearde those things which Christ hath reuealed by his comming. Therefore to the end the Prophet Iuel may commend the excellencie of the newe Testament, he

affirmeth and foretelleth that the grace of the Spirite shall bee more plentifull in time thereof: and againe, that it shall come vnto mee
 Mar. 13. 17. Luke 10. 24. men.

And your *sonnes shall prophetic*. By the worde Prophecie, hee meant to note the rare and singular gifte of vnderstanding. And to the same purpose tendeth that partition which followeth afterwarde: *your young men* shall see visions, and your olde men shall dreame dreames. For we gather out of the twelfth Chapter of Numbers, that these were the two ordinary wayes whereby God did reueale himselfe to the prophets. For in that place when the Lorde exempteth Moses from the common sort of Prophetes, he saith: I appeare vnto my seruants by a vision, or by a dreame: but I speake vnto Moses face to face. Therefore wee see that two kinles are put after the generall worde, for a confirmation. Yet this is the summe, that they shall all bee Prophetes so soone as the holie Ghost shall bee powred out from heauen. But here it is objected, that there was no such thing, euen in the Apostles themselves, neither yet in the whole multitude of the faithfull. I answer, that the prophets did commonly vse to shadowe vnder tropes most fit for their time, the kingdome of Christ. When they speake of the worshippe of God, they name the Altar, the Sacrifices, the offering of golde, siluer, and frankensence. Notwithstanding we know that the Altars do cease, the Sacrifices are abolished, whereof there was some vse in time of the Lawe: and that the Lorde requireth some higher thing at our handes, than earthlie riches. That is true in deede, but the Prophetes, whiles they apply their stile vnto the capacite of their time, comprehend vnder figures (wherewith the people were then well acquainted) those things, which wee see otherwile reuealed and shewed now, like as
 Num. 12. 6. Isaic. 66. 21. when hee promiseth else where, that hee will make Priostes of Leuites, and Leuites of the common sort of men: this is his meaning, that vnder the kingdome of Christ euerie base person shall be extolled vnto an honorable estate. Therefore if wee desire to haue the true and naturall meaning of this place, we must not vrge the words which are taken out of the olde order of the Lawe: but wee must onely seeke the truth without figures. And that is it, that the Apostles through the sodaine inspiration of the Spirite, did intreat of the heauenly mysteries. *Prophecie*, that is to saie, diuinelie and aboue the common order. Therefore this worde Prophecie doeth signifie nothing else, saue onelie the rare and excellent gifte of vnderstanding: as if Ioel shoulde say, Vnder the kingdome of Christ there shall not bee a fewe Prophetes onelie, vnto whome GOD may reueale his secretes: but all men shall bee endewed with spirituall wisdom, euen to the prophetically excellencie. As it is also in Ieremie. Euery man shall no longer teach
 Ierc. 13. 34. his neighbour, because they shall all knowe mee from the least vnto the greatest. And in these wordes Peter inuieth the Iewes, vnto whom hee speaketh, to bee partakers of the same grace. As if he shoulde saie, The Lorde is readie to powre out that Spirit farre and wide, which hee hath powred vpon vs. Therefore, vnlesse you your selues bee the cause
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offer, yee shall receiue with vs of this fulnes. And as for vs, let vs know that the same is spoken to vs at this day, which was then spoken to the Iewes. For although those visible graces of the Spirit be ceased, yet God hath not withdrawne his Spirit from his Church. Wherefore he offereth him daily vnto vs all, by this same promise, without putting any difference. Wherefore we are poore and needie onely through our owne sluggishnes: and also it appeareth manifestly that those are wicked and sacrilegious enemies of the Spirite, which keepe backe the Christian common people from the knowledge of God, and for as much as hee himselfe doth not onely admit, but also call by name vnto himselfe women and men, yonge and old.

18 *Vpon my seruants.* In these words the promise is restrained vnto the worshipers of God. For God doth not prophane his Spirit: which hee should do, if he should make the same common to the vnbeleeuing and despisers. It is certaine that we are made the seruants of God by the spirite: and that therefore we are not, vntill such time as we haue receiued the same: but first, whom God hath adopted to bee of his familie, and whom he hath framed by his Spirite to obey him, those doth he furnish with new giftes afterward. Againe the Prophet did not respect that order of time, but his meaning was to make this grace proper to the Church alone. And for as much as the Church was onely among the Iewes, he calleth them honorablie the seruants and handmaids of God. But, after that God did gather vnto himself on euery side a Church, the wall of separation being pulled downe, so many as are receiued into the societie of the covenant, are called by the same name. Onely let vs remember that the Spirit is appointed for the Church properly.

19 *And I will shew wonders.* Wee must first see what is meant by this great day of the Lorde. Some do expound it of the former comming of Christ in the flesh: and other some referre it vnto the last day of the resurrection: I doe allowe neither opinion. For in my iudgement the Prophet comprehendeth the whole kingdome of Christ. And so he calleth it the Great day, after that the sonne of God began to be reuealed in the flesh, that he may lead vs into the fulfilling of his kingdome. Therefore hee appointeth no certaine day, but hee beginneth this day at the first preaching of the Gospel, and he extendeth the same vnto the last resurrection. Those which restraine it vnto the time of the Apostles, are mooued with this reason: because the Prophet ioyneth this member, and that which goeth next before togitlier. But in that, there is no absurditie at all, because the Prophet doeth assigne the time, when these things beganne to come to passe, howsoeuer they haue a continuall going forward euen vntill the ende of the world. Furthermore whereas he saith that the sunne shall be turned to darkenesse, and the moone into blood, they are figuratiue speeches, whereby he doth giue vs to vnderstand thus much, that the Lord wil shew tokens of his wrath through out the whole frame of the worlde, which shall bring men euen to their wits ende, as if there shoulde bee some horrible and fearefull change of nature wrought. For as the sunne and moone are vnto vs wit-

nesses of Gods fatherlie fauour towards vs, whiles that by course they giue light to the earth: so on the other side, the Prophet saith that they shall bee messengers to foreshewe Gods wrath and displeasure. And this is the seconde member of the prophetic. For after that hee had intreated of the spirituall grace which shoulde bee abundantlie powred out vpon all flesh: least any man shoulde imagine that all thinges shoulde bee quiet and prosperous together, therewithall hee addeth, that the estate of the worlde shall bee troublesome, and full of greate feare vnder Christ. As Christ himselfe doeth more fully declare, Math. 24. and Luke 21. But this serueth greatlie to the setting forth of grace, that where as all thinges doe threaten destruction, yet who so euer doeth call vpon the name of the Lorde, is sure to be saued. By the darkenesse of the Sunne, by the bloodie streaming of the Moone, by the blacke vapour of smoke, the Prophet meant to declare, that whither so euer men turne their eyes, there shall manie thinges appeare both vpwarde and downwarde, which maie make them amazed and afraide, as hee hath already saide. Therefore this is as much as if hee shoulde haue saide, that the worlde was neuer in a more miserable case, that there were neuer so manie and such cruell tokens of Gods wrath. Hence may wee gather howe vnestimable the goodness of God is, who offereth a present remedie for so great euils: and againe, howe vnthankfull they are towards God, and howe forward, which doe not flie vnto the sanctuarie of saluation, which is nigh vnto them, and doeth meete them. Again, it is out of all doubt that God meaneth by this so dolefull a description, to stirre vp all Godlie men, that they may with a more seruent desire seeke for saluation. And Peter citeth it to the same ende: that the Iewes maie knowe that they shall bee more than miserable, vnlesse they receiue that grace of the Spirit which is offered vnto them. Yet heere may a question bee asked howe this can hange together, that when Christ is reuealed, there shoulde such a sea of miseries ouerflowe and breake out therewithall. For it may seeme to be a thing verie inconuenient, that hee shoulde bee the onely pledge of Gods loue toward mankinde, in whom the heauenlie father doeth lay open all the treasure of his goodness: yea he powreth out the bowels of his mercie vpon vs, and that yet by the comming of the same his sonne, his wrath shoulde bee more whot than it was woont, so that it should as it were quite consume both heauen and earth at once. But we must first marke, that because men are too slowe to receiue Christ, they must bee constrained by diuerse afflictions, as it were with whippes. Secondly, for as much as Christ doeth call vnto himselfe all those which are heauie laden and labour, wee must first bee tamed by manie miseries, that wee may learne humilitie. For through great prosperitie, men doe set vp the hotties of pride. And hee cannot but despise Christ fiercelie, who so euer hee be, that seemeth to himselfe to bee happie. Thirdly because wee are more than we ought, set vpon the seeking of the peace of the flesh: whereby it cometh also to passe, that manie tye the grace of Christ vnto the present

Mat. 11.24.

sent life, it is expedient for vs to be accustomed to thinke otherwise, that we may knowe that the kingdome of Christ is spiritual. Therefore to the ende God may teach vs that the good things of Christ are heauenly, he doth exercise vs according to the flesh, with manie miseries. Whereby it commeth to passe that we do, seeke our felicity without the world. Moreouer men doe bring miseries vpon themselues through their vnthankfulnesse. For the seruant which knoweth his masters will, and doeth not obey, is worthy of greater & more stripes: The more familiarly that God doeth communicate with vs in Christ, the more doth our vngodlinesse growe and breake out into open contumacie: so that it is no maruell if when Christ reuealed, there appeare manie tokens of Gods vengeance on the other side, for as much as me do hereby more grieuouly prouoke God against them, & kindle his wrath through wicked contempt. Surely in that the day of Christ is fearefull, it is an accidental thing, whether God will correct our slouthfulnes, to bring vs vnder which are yet vnapt to be taught: or whether he wil punish our vnthankfulnes. For it bringeth with it of it selfe, nothing but that which is pleasant. But the contempt of Gods grace doeth prouoke him to horrible anger not without cause.

Luk. 12. 47.

21 *Who so euer shall call vpon.* An excellent place. For as God doeth prick vs forward like sluggish Asses, with threatnings & terrors, to seeke saluation: so, after that he hath brought darknes vpon the face of heauen and earth, yet doth he shew a meanes whereby saluation may shine before our eyes: to wit, if we shall call vpon him. For we must diligentlie note this circumstance. If God should promise saluation simple, it were a great matter: but it is a far greater, when as he promisseth the same amidst manifold dungeons of death. Whiles that (saith he) all things shal be out of order, and the feare of destruction shal possesse al things, onely call vpon me and yee shal be saued. Therefore howsoeuer man be swallowed vp in the goulfe of miseries, yet is there set before him a way to escape. We must also note the vniuersall worde, *who so euer*. For God admitteth all men vnto himselfe without exception, and by this meanes doth he inuite them to saluation, as Paul gathereth in the tenth chapt. to the Romanes, and as the prophet had set it downe before: *Thou Lord,* which hearest the praiser, vnto thee shall all flesh come. Therefore for as much as no man is excluded from calling vpon God, the gate of saluation is set open vnto all men. Neither is there anie other thing which keepeth vs back from entring in, saue onely our owne vnbeliefe. I speake of all, vnto whom God doth make manifest himselfe by the Gospel. But like as those which call vpon the name of the Lord are sure of saluation, so we must thinke that without the same we are thrise miserable and vndone. And when as our saluation is placed in calling vpon God, there is nothing in the meane season taken from faith, for as much as this inuocation is grouded in faith alone. There is also another circumstance no lesse worthie the noting: in that the Prophet doth signifie, that the calling vpon God doeth properly appertaine and agree vnto the last dayes. For although he woulde bee called vpon in all ages, notwithstanding since that hee shewed himselfe to be a Father, in Christ,

Rom. 10. 20.

we haue the more easie accessse vnto him. Which thing ought both the more to embolden vs, and to take from vs all sluggishnes. As he himselfe doth also reason, that by this priuiledge our forwardnes to pray, is doubled to vs: Hitherto haue ye asked nothing in my name: aske, and yee shall receiue: as if he should say, Heretofore although I did not yet appeare to be a mediatour, and a duocate in the flesh, yet did yee pray: but now when you shall haue me to bee your patron, with howe much more courage ought yee to do that?

22 *Yee men of Israel, heare these wordes: Iesus of Nazareth, a man shewed towards yous of God, by powers and wonders, and signes which God did by him in the midst of you, as you your selues know:*

23 *Him, I say, haue yee taken, being deliuered by the determinate counsell and foreknowledge of God, by the hands of wicked men, and haue slaine him, hauing fastned him to the crosse.*

24 *Whom God hath raised vp, hauing loosed the sorrowes of death, forasmuch as it was impossible that he should be holden of it.*

22 *Iesus of Nazareth.* Now doth Peter apply vnto his purpose the propheticke of Iosel: namely, that the Iewes may thereby know that the time of restoring was present: and that Christ was giuen them for this purpose. For this promise was no otherwise to be fulfilled, saue onely by the comming of the mediatour. And this is the right vse of all those giftes, which we haue by Christ, whiles that they bring vs vnto Christ, as vnto a fountaine. But he commeth hither by little and little. For he doth not by and by in the beginning affirme that Iesus was Christ: but hee saith, onely that hee was a man, sent of God: and that doth he proue by his miracles. Afterward he addeth, that he rose from death, when hee was slaine. Whereby it appeareth more certainly and more fully, that hee was not some one of the Prophets, but the verie sonne of God, who was promised to bee the repaire of all things. Let this therefore be the first member, that Iesus of Nazareth was a man approued of God by manifest testimonies, so that he could not bee despised, as some base and obscure persō. The old interpreter did not euil translate *hupodhedheigmenon*, Approued. And Erasmus is deceiued, who thinketh that he did reade it otherwise. And he himselfe did not expresse Luke his mind, when as he translateth it Giuen. For seeing that worde doeth signifie among the Grecians to shew: whereupon the Mathematicians also call those arguments whereby they set a thing as it were before a mans eyes *apodexis*, or demonstrations: Luke meant to say that Iesus came not vnknowne, and without any testimonie or approbation: but that those miracles which God shewed by him, serued to this ende, that hee might bee famous and excellent. Therefore he saith, that he was shewed toward the Iewes: because God woulde haue his son to be accounted excellent and great amongst them. As if he should say, that miracles were not appointed for other nations, but for the Iewes: that they might know that Iesus was sent vnto them of God.

By great workes. He calleth myracles by these three names. And because God doth shew forth his power in the after a newe & vnwonted sort, or doeth at least procure greater admiration, they are for good causes called *great workes*. For we are commonly more moued when any extraordinary thing doth happen. In which respect they are also called Wonders: because they make vs astonied. And for this cause are they called signes: because the Lorde will not haue mens mindes to stay there, but to be lifted vp higher. As they are referred vnto another ende. He put in three wordes, to the ende he might the more extoll Christ his myracles, and enforce the people by this heaping and laying of wordes together, to consider the same. Furthermore he maketh not Christe the chiefe authour, but only the minister: because as we haue already said, he determined to goe forwarde by degrees. Notwithstanding here may a question be asked, whether myracles do suffice to bee a sufficient and iust approbation or no: because by this meanes inchaunters might cause their legier-demaine, to be beleued. I answer, that the iuggling casts of Satan doe much differ from the power of God. Christ saith elsewhere, that the kingdome of Antichrist shall bee in wonders, but he addeth by and by, in lying wonders. If any man object that we cannot easily discern, because he saith, that they shall haue so great color that they shall deceiue (if it could be) the very elect: I answer again that this error proceedeth only from our owne want of wit, because we are so dull. For God doth shew his power manifestly enough. Therefore there is sufficient approbation of the doctrine and of the ministry, in the myracles which God doth worke, so that we be not blinde. And whereas it is not of sufficient force among the wicked, because they may now & then be deceiued with the false myracles of Satan, this must bee imputed vnto their owne blindnesse: but whosoever hath a pure heart, hee doeth also know God with the pure eyes of his minde, so often as hee doeth shewe himselfe. Neither can Satan otherwise delude vs, saue onely when throw the wickednesse of our heart, our iudgement is corrupt, and our eyes blinded, or at least bleared through our owne slothfulnesse.

2. Thes. 2. 9.

23 *Him haue yee slaine.* He maketh mention of the death of Christe for this cause chiefly, that the resurrection might the more assuredly be beleued. It was a thing full well knowne among the Iewes that Christ was crucified. Therefore in that hee rose againe, it is a great and wonderfull token of his diuine power. In the meane season, to the ende he may pricke their consciences with the feeling of sinne, hee saith that they slue him. Not that they crucified him with their owne handes, but because the people with one voice desired to haue him put to death. And although many of the hearers vnto whom he speaketh, did not consent vnto that wicked and vngodlie crueltie, yet doth hee iustly impute the same to the nation: because all of them had defiled them selues either with their silence, or els through their carelesnesse. Neither hath the cloake and colour of ignorauce any place, forasmuch as he was shewed before of God. This guiltines therefore vnder which he bringeth the is a preparation vnto repentance.

By the determinate counsell. He remoueth a stumbling block : because it seemeth at the first blush to be a thing verie inconuenient, that that man whom God had so greatlie adorned, being afterward laid open to all maner mocking, doth suffer so reprochfull a death. Therefore because the crosse of Christ doth commonly vse to trouble vs at the first sight, for this cause Peter declareth that he suffered nothing by chaunce, or because he wanted power to deliuer himselfe, but because it was so determined and appointed by God. For this knowledge alone; that the death of Christ was ordeined by the eternall counsell of God, did cut off all occasion of foolishhe and wicked cogitations, and did preuent all offences which might otherwise be conceined. For wee must know this, that God doth decree nothing in vaine or rashly. Whereuppon it followeth that there was iust cause, for which he would haue Christ to suffer. The same knowledge of gods prouidence, is a steppes to consider the end and frute of Christ his death. For this meeteth vs by & by in the counsell of God, that the iust was deliuered for our sinnes, & that his blood was the price of our death. And heere is a notable place touching the prouidence of God, that we may knowe that aswell our life as our death is gouerned by it. Luke intreateth in deed of Christ. But in his person we haue a mirror, which doth represent vnto vs the vniuersall prouidence of God, which doth stretch it self throughout the whole world: yet doeth it specially shine vnto vs who are the members of Christ. Luke setteth downe two things in this place, the foreknowledge, and the decree of God. And although the foreknowledge of God is former in order (because God doth first see what he will determine, before hee doth in deed determine the same) yet doth he put the same after the counsell and decree of God, to the end we may know that God would nothing, neither appointed any thing, saue that which he had long before directed to his end. For men do oftentimes rashly decree many things, because they decree them so dainly. Therefore to the end Peter may teach that the counsell of God is not without reason, he coupleth also therewithall his foreknowledge. Now we must distinguish these two, and so much the more diligentlie, because manie are deceiued in this point. For passing ouer the counsell of God, wherewith he doth guide and gouerne the whole worlde, they catch at his bare foreknowledge. Thence comineth that common distinction, that although God doth foresee all things, yet doth he lay no necessitie vpon his creatures. And in deed it is true that God doth know this thing or that thing before, for this cause, because it shall come to passe: but as we see that Peter doth teach that God did not onely foresee that which befell Christ, but it was decreed by him. And hence must bee gathered a generall doctrine : because God doeth no lesse shewe his prouidence in gouerning the whole worlde, than in ordaining and appointing the death of Christe. Therefore it belongeth to God not only to know before, things to come, but of his owne will to determine what he will haue done. This second thing did Peter declare, when hee saide, That he was deliuered by the certain and determinate counsel of God. Therefore the foreknowledge of god is another thing thā the wil of
God

God, whereby he gouerneth and ordereth all things. Some which are of quicker sight, cōfesse, that god doth not onely foreknow, but also gouern with his beck what things soeuer are done in the world. Neuerthelesse they imagine a confused gouernment, as if God did giue libertie to his creatures to follow their owne nature. They say that the Sunne is ruled by the will of God, because in giuing light to vs, he doth his dutie, which was once enioyned him by God. They think that man hath free will after this sort left him, because his nature is disposed or inclined vnto the free choyce of good and euill. But they which thinke so, doe feigne that God sitteth idle in heauen. The scripture teacheth vs farre otherwise, which ascribeth vnto God a special gouernment in all things, & in mans actions. Notwithstanding it is our dutie to ponder & cōsider to what end it teacheth this. For we must beware of doting speculations, wherewith we see many carried away. The scripture will exercise our faith, that we may know that we are defended by the hand of God, least we be subiect to the iniuries of Satan and the wicked. It is good for vs to imbrace this one thing: neither did Peter meane any thing els in this place. Yea wee haue an example set before vs in Christ, whereby we may learne to bee wise with sobrietie. For it is out of question, that his flesh was subiect to corruption, according to nature. But the prouidence of God did set the same free. If any mā aske whether the bones of Christ could be broken or no: it is not to be denied, that they were subiect to breaking naturally, yet could there no bone be broken, because God had so appointed and determined. By this example (I say) we are taught so to giue the chiefest roome to gods prouidence, that we keepe ourselues within our bounds: and that we thrust not our selues rashlie & vndiscretly into the secretes of God, whither our eyesight doth not pearce.

Iohn. 19. 36.

By the handes of the wicked. Because Peter seemeth to graunt, that the wicked did obey God; hereupon followeth two absurdities: the one, eyther that God is the author of euils: or that men do not sin what wickednesse soeuer they commit. I answere concerning the second, that the wicked do nothing lesse than obey God, howsoeuer they doe execute that which God hath determined with himself. For obedience springeth frō a voluntarie affection. And we know that the wicked haue a farre other purpose. Again, no man obeieith God, saue he which knoweth his will. Therefore obedience dependeth vpon the knowledge of Gods will. Furthermore God hath reuealed vnto vs his will in the law: wherfore those mē do obey god, who do that alone which is agreeable to the law of god: And againe, which submit themselues willingly to his gouernment. Wee see no such thing in al the wicked, who god doth driue hither & thither, they themselues being ignorant. No mā therefore will say that they are excusable vnder this colour, because they obey god: for as much as both the wil of God must be sought in his lawe: and they so muche as in them lyeth, doe couet to resist God. As touching the other point, I denie that God is the Authour of euill: because there is a certaine noting of a wicked affection in this worde. For the wicked deede is esteemed according to the ende wherēat a man aymeth. When men committe

theft,

theft or murder, they offend for this cause, because they are theeues or murderers. And in the theft and murder, there is a wicked purpose. God who vseth their wickednesse is to be placed in the higher degree. For he hath respect vnto a farre other thing, because he will chastice the one, & exercise the patience of the other: & so he doth neuer decline from his nature, that is from perfect righteousnesse. So that, whereas Christ was deliuered by the hands of wicked men, wheras he was crucified, it came to passe by the appointment and ordinaunce of God. But treason which is of it selfe wicked, and murder which hath in it so great wickednesse, must not be thought to be the workes of God.

24 *Having loosed the sorrowes of death.* By the sorrowes of death I vnderstand some farther thing than the bodily sense or feeling. For those which dulie cōsider the nature of death: because they heare that it is the curse of God, must needes conceiue that God is angrie in death. Hence commeth marueilous horror: wherein there is greater miserie than in death it selfe. Furthermore, Christe died vpon this condition, that hee might take vpon him our guiltinesse. That inward feare of conscience, which made him so afraid, that he sweet blood, when he presented himself before the throne and tribunall seate of God, did more vex him, and brought vpon him greater horror, than al the tormentes of the flesh. And whereas Peter saith, that Christ did wrastle with such sorrowes, & doth also declare that he had the victorie: by this it commeth to passe, that the faithfull ought not now to be afraid of death. For death hath not the like qualitie now which was in Adam: because by the victorie of Christe the curse of God is swallowed vp. Wee feele in deede yet the pricking of sorrowes, but such as do not wholly wound vs, whilest that we hold vp the buckler of faith against them. He addeth a reason, because it was vnpossible that Christ should be oppressed by death, who is the authour of life.

1. Cor. 15.

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25 *For Dauid saith of him, I saw the Lord before me alwaies, because hee is on my right hand: least I should be moued.*

26 *For this my heart reioyced, and my tongue was glad: moreouer my fleshe shall rest in hope.*

27 *Because thou wilt not leaue my soule in hell: neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.*

28 *Thou hast made knowne vnto me the wayes of life, thou shalt fill mee with gladnes, with thy face.*

29 *Men and brethren, seeing that I may boldly speake vnto you of the Patriark Dauid, because he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre remaineth with vs vntill this day.*

30 *Therefore seeing he was a Prophet, and did knowe that God had sworne vnto him with an oth, that it should come to passe, that Christe shoulde rise of the frutes of his loynes, concerning the fleshe, who shoulde sit vpon his throne.*

31 *He knowing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christe, that his soule was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.*

25 The resurrection which was both declared and witnessed by cer-
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tainc and euident testimonies, and which might also haue been gathered out of the continuall doctrine of the prophetes; was to be proued to the Iewes as some new and strange thing. And no maruell. For wee see that although Christe had oftentimes beat the same into his Disciples heads, yet did they profite but a little. And yet did they retaine certaine principles of true doctrine, which might haue made a way for them vnto the knowledge of Christ: as we shall see by & by. Therefore because the gift of the Spirit was a frute of the resurrection of Christ, he propoueth by the testimonie of Dauid, that Christ must needes haue risen againe, that the Iewes may thereby knowe that hee was the authour of the gift. For he taketh it as a thing which all men graunt, that he was raysed vp from death, that he may liue not for himselfe, but for his. Nowe wee see Peter his drift. That that ought to seeme no straunge thing, which was foretolde so long before. And that Iesus is also Christe, because Dauid did prophesie of him, as of the head of the church. First of all wee must see whether this place ought altogether to be vnderstood of Christe, as Peter affirmeth: that done, if there bee any thing in the wordes worth the noting, wee will in order discusse it. Peter denieth that that agreeth with Dauid, which is said in this place: Thou shalt not suffer thine holie one to see corruption: because Dauid his carkeasse was corrupt in the graue. It seemeth at the first blush to be but a light argument. For a man might easily obiekt, That the word is not to be vrged, forasmuch as Dauid meant nothing else, saue onely to exempt him selfe from destruction. Therefore howsoever corruption did touche him, yet doth that no whit hinder, but that he may easily say that he was safe from the danger thereof: because he knew that the Lorde would deliuer him. Yea it seemeth to be a repetition of the former sentence, according to the common custome of the Hebrew tongue. Which if it be so, the sense shalbe plaine, that God will not suffer him to be oppressed with death, or that death should consume him. And this interpretatiō is confirmed by that that where we read, *hell* it is in Hebrew *Seol*: where we read *corruption*, there it is *Shachar*. Both these words do signifie the graue. By this means Dauid should say twise, that he shalbe deliuered from death by the grace of God. Finally, he saith the same thing in this place, which he saith, *Psa. 49.* God shall redeeme my soule from the hand of hell. Like as on the other side, when he speaketh of the reprobates, he is wont to take, *going* downe into the graue, for destruction. I aunswere brieflie, that there is some greater thing expressed in this place, than the common redemption or deliuerance of the godly. Dauid in deede doeth promise that God will be his eternall deliuerer as well in life as in death. Neither hadde he beene muche better for this, to haue beene once deliuered from one daunger, vnlesse he had hoped that he should be safe euen vnto the end through Gods protection: but he speaketh of such safetie as is not common. And surely the wordes doe sound that he speaketh of some new & singular priuiledge. Admit I graunt that it is a repetitiō, & that ther is al one thing vttered in these two members, Thou shalt not leaue my soule in hell: & Thou shalt not suffer me to see corruption: yet do I denie that

Psal. 16. 6.

Psal. 49. 16.

it is simpy to bee vnderstood that God will deliuer his holie one from eternall destruction: For freedome from corruption is promised by name. Neither do I passe for this, that *Shachar* doeth signifie the graue; as *Seol*, which is put in the former member. For although I do not stand nor contend about the wordes, yet must we respect the *Etymologie*. Therefore for asmuch as the graue is called *Shachar*, because it doeth corrupt mans bodye with rottenesse, it is not to bee doubted but that Dauid meant to note that qualitie. Therefore the place is not so much expressed by this word, as the condition of rotting. So that the sense is, that God will not suffer him of whom the Psalm speakech, To rot or corrupt in the graue. And forasmuch as Dauid was not free from this necessitie, it followeth that the prophesie was neither truely nor perfectly fulfilled in him. And that the Psalm ought altogether to be expounded of Christe, the thing it selfe doth proue. For seeing that Dauid was one of the sonnes of Adā, he could not escape that vniuersal condition and estate of mankinde, Dust thou art, & in to dust thou shalt return: the graue standeth open (I say) for al the children of Adam, that it may swallow the vp, & consume them: so that no man can exempt himself fro corruption. So that beholding our felues apart from Christ, we see the graue prepared for vs, which threatneth to vs corruption. Wherefore if Dauid be separated from Christ, that shal not belong to him which is here said, that he shalbe preserued from the graue. Therefore when he boasteth that he shalbe free fro the graue, as touching corruption, without all doubt he placeth himself in the body of Christ, wherein death was ouercome, & the kingdom therof abolished. But & if Dauid do promise himself exempting from the graue in another respect, saue only so far forth as he is a member of Christ, hereby it appeareth that this freedome must begin at Christe as at the head. What man soeuer shalbe of sound iudgement, shall easily knowe that this is a good argument, God did put al mankind vnder corruption: Therefore Dauid, inasmuch as he was of the number of men, could not be free from the same. Neither is it to be doubted, but that the Iewes, before who this sermon was made, forasmuch as without questiō that *maxim* was of force amongst the, that they were to hope for the restoring of things at the hands of Christe alone, did the more readily stay themselves vpon the words of Peter: because they saw that that could no. otherwise be which the words do import, vnlasse they should apply it to the *Messias*. For they were not come to that point of impudencie, at least those of whom mention is made heere, that they durst cauil in matters which were euident. For god had then offered vnto his disciples those which were godly hearers, and apt to bee taught. They sought the *Messias* in the olde Testament. They knew that Dauid was a figure of him. There was amongst them some religion, and reuerence of the scriptures then. But nowe the impudencie of all the whole nation almost is desperate. Howsoever they be vrged, they wrench themselves out one way or other. Where ther is no way to escape, yet they break through. Although they be overcome, yet wil they not yield. Neither is it to be doubted, but that this their shameles frowardnes, is a punishment for their vngodlines. But let vs return vnto Peter his sermon. Seing that Dauid doth not only affirm that

Gen. 3. 19.

3. 19.

3. 19.

God also shalbe his deliuerer, but doth expresse a singular way & means: namelie, that he shal not be subiect to the corruptiō of the graue, Peter doth for good causes gather, that that doth not properly appertain vnto him for that his body was corrupt in the graue. And now because this had byn somwhat hard to be spoken among the Iewes, he mollifieth the hardnes with a circūlocutiō. For he doth not flatlie denie in one worde, that that was fulfilled in deed in Dauid, but doth only by the way signifie so much vnto the, because he lyeth consumed in the graue after the common custom of other men. And Dauid did so prophetic of Christ, that he did both apply this consolatiō vnto himself priuately, & also extend the same vnto the whole body of the church. For that which is sound & perfect in the head, is spread abroad, being afterwarde powred out into all the members. Neither is it to be denied, but that Dauid spake of himself in this place: yet only so far forth as he beheld himself in Christ, as in the mirror of life. First he hath respect vnto Christe: after that he turneth his eyes toward himself, & other the faithfull. So that we haue a generall doctrine prescribed vnto vs in this place, concerning the nature of faith, the spiritual ioy of conscience, & the hope of eternall deliuerance.

Isa. We must hold this principle, if we will haue God present with vs, we must set him before our eyes: & that before he do appear: for the prospect of faith pearceth farre further than vnto the present experience. Therefore faith hath this propertie, to set god alwaies before it as a guide in all dangers & confused matters. For there is nothing that doth so much bold vs vp, as when we know that God is present with vs: as the opinion of his absence doth often cast vs down, & at length quite discourage vs. Dauid addeth, That he tooke not heed in vain vnto the directiō of God. He is (saith he) at my right hand: whereby he doth signifie, that we need not to fear least we be deceiued, whē as we set him before vs as present: for we shal alwaies feel his help most readie. Faith in hoping for the help of God, ought to preuent & ouercome al experience, & whatsoeuer is perceived by the sense: but so soone as it shall giue this glorie to God, that it doeth beholde him in his worde, although he be absent, and so consequently, inuisible; it shall be overcome with the effect of the thing. For the measure of faith is not able to comprehend the infinite greatnesse of the power & goodnes of God. He draweth a similitude frō those which when they will vnderprop the weak, or strengthen the fearefull, do ioyne themselves vnto their side. Not to be moued, is not to be thrown down frō their degree, but to remain firme in their estate: like as also *Psal. 46.* God is in the midst of it, therefore shall it not be moued. For although it come to passe sometimes that the godly bee sore shaken; yet because they come to themselves again; they are said to continue firme. Therefore there is no cause why they should be afraid of falling, who are vpheld by the help of God. Like as on the other side, those which place their strength any where els saue only in God, they shall be like to fall at every blast of wind, but at any mean wind of temptation they shall fall to the ground.

For this my hart reioyced. Ioy of the soul, gladnes of the tongue, & quietnes of al the whole body, do ensue vpon sure hope, & confidence: for vncertaine be quite

Psal. 46. 6.

11. 70. 1

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11. 70. 1

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11. 71. 19

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quite past feeling, they must needs bee carefull and sorrowfull, and so consequently miserably tormented, so long as they feele themselues destitute of the helpe of God. But that sure trust which we repose in God, doth not only deliuer vs from carefulnesse, but doth also replenishe our hearts with wonderfull ioy and gladnesse. That is the ioy, which Christ promised to his disciples, should be full in them; and which hee testified could not bee taken from them. Iohn 16. & 17. He expresseth the greatness of the ioy, when he saith, That it cannot be kept in, but that it will break forth into the gladnes of the tongue. *Cabod* doth signifie in deed, glory, but it is taken in that place as in many other for the Tongue. And so the Grecians haue truly trallated the same. The rest of the *flesh*, doth signifie the quietnes of the whole man, which we haue through the protection of God. Neither is this any let, because the faithful are continually out of quiet and tremble: for as in the middest of sorrowes they do neuertheles reioyce: so there are no troubles so great that can break the of their rest. If any man obiekt that the peace of the faithfull doth consist in the spirite, and that it is not of the flesh: I answere, that the faithfull doe rest in bodie: not that they are free from troubles, but because they beleue that God careth for them wholie, and that not only their soule shalbe safe through his protection, but their bodie also.

27 *Because thou shalt not leaue.* To leaue the soule in hell, is to suffer the same to be oppressed with destruction. There be two wordes vsed in this place, both which doe signifie the graue amongst the Hebricians. Because *Shaal* doth signifie to Require, I suppose it is called *Sepl*, because death is insatiable: whence also cometh that translation, Hel hath enlarged her soule. Again, they set open their mouth like hel. And because the latter *Sahath*, is deriued and fet fro corruption or consumption, that qualitie is to bee considered, as Dauid meant to note the same. Those thinges which are disputed in this place by diuers, concerning the descending of Christe into hell, are in my iudgement superfluous: because they are farre from the intent and purpose of the Prophet. For the word *anima* or *soule*, doth not so much signifie the spirite being of an immortal essence, as the life it self. For when a man is dead, and lieth in the graue, the graue is said to rule ouer his life. Whereas the Grecians translate it *holie*, it is in Hebrew *Chassith*, which doth properly signifie meek, or, gentle, but Luke did not much regard this, because it doth not much appertaine vnto the present purpose. Furthermore gentleness and meeknes is so often commended in the faithfull, because it beloueth them to imitate and resemble the nature of their Father.

1. Cor. 15.

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1. Cor. 15.

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Psa. 16. 11.

Psal. 80. 4.

28 *Thou hast made known.* He meaneth that he was restored fro death to life by the grace of God. For in that hee was as it were a man raised fro death to life, he acknowledgeth that it was a great good gift of God. This was in such sort fulfilled in Christ, that there wanted nothing vnto perfection. As for the members they haue their measure. Therefore Christ was far from corruption, that he may be the first frutes of those which rise from death. We shal follow him in our order at length, but being first turned into dust. That which followeth, that he was filled with gladnesse, with

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the countenance of God agreeth with that : Shew vs thy face, and we shalbe safe. And againe, The light of thy countenance is shewed vpon vs: thou hast put gladnesse in my heart. For it is only the pleasantnes of Gods countenance, which doth not only make vs glad, but also quicken vs: againe, when the same is turned away or troubled, wee must needs faint.

30 Therefore seeing he was a prophet. He sheweth by two reasons that it is no maruell, if Dauid doe speak of things that should come to passe long after his time: the former is, because hee was a prophet. And wee knowe that things to come, & such as are remoued far from the knowledge of men, are reuealed vnto the Prophetes. Therefore it were wickednesse to measure their speeches according to the common manner and order, which we vse in measuring the speeches of other men, forasmuch as they goe beyond the long courses of yeeres, hauing the Spirite for their director. Whereuppon they are also called *Seers*: because beeing placed as it were vpon an high tower, they see those things which by reason of great distaunce are hidden from other men. Another reason is, because Christ was promised to him peculiarly. This *maxime* was so common amongst the Iewes, that they had euer now and then the sonne of Dauid in their mouth, so often as there was any mention made of Christ. They bee no such arguments I confesse, as doe necessarilie proue, that this prophesie is to be expounded of Christ: neither was that Peter his intent and purpose: but first he meant to preuent the contrarie obiection, whence Dauid had such skill to foretell a thing which was vnknown. Therefore he saith, That hee knewe Christe, both by propheticall reuelation, and also by a singular promise. Furthermore, this principle was of greater force amongst the better minded sort, which Paule setteth downe, that Christ is the ende of the lawe. No man therefore did doubt of this, but that this was the marke whereat all the Prophetes did ayme, to lead the Godlie vnto Christe as it were by the hande. Therefore what notable or extraordinarie thing soeuer they did vtter, the Iewes were commonlie perswaded that it did agree with Christe. Furthermore wee must note, that Peter doeth reason soundely, when hee gathereth that Dauid was not ignoraunt of that which was the chiefeest point of all reuelations.

Rom. 10. 4.

Hee had sworne with an oth. God sware, not only to the ende he might make Dauid beleue his promise, but also that the thing promised might be had in greater estimation. And to this end in my iudgement it is here repeated, that the Iewes may think with themselves, of what great weight the promise was, which God did make so notable & so famous. The same admonition is profitable for vs also. For we neede not to doubt of this, but that the Lorde meant to set forth the excellencie of the couenant, by putting in a solemne othe. In the meane season this is also a fit remedie for the infirmitie of our faith, that the sacred name of God is set forth vnto vs, that his wordes may carrie the greater credite. These wordes according to the fleshe, do declare that there was some more noble thing in Christe than the fleshe. Therefore Christe did so come of the

seed of Dauid as he was man, that he doth neuertheless retain his diuinitie: and so the distinction betweene the two natures is plainly expressed: when as Christ is called the sonne of God, according to his eternall essence, in like sort as he is called the seed of Dauid according to the fleshe.

32 *This Iesus hath God raised vp: whereof we all are witnesses.*

33 *Hee beeing therefore exalted by the right hand of God, and hauing receiued the promise of the holy Ghost of the Father, he hath now shed forth that which ye now see and heare.*

34 *For Dauid is not ascended into heauen: But he saith, The Lord said vnto my Lord, Sit at my right hande:*

35 *Vntill I make thine enemies thy footstoole.*

36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know for a suretie, that God hath made this Iesus Lord, and the same Christ, whom yee haue crucified.*

32 *This Iesus.* After that he hath proued by the testimonie of Dauid, that it was most requisite that Christ should rise again, he saith, that hee and the rest of his fellowes were suche witnesses, as sawe him with their eies after his resurrection. For this texte will not suffer this worde *raised vp* to be drawne vnto any other sense. Whereupon it followeth that that was fulfilled in Iesus of Nazareth, which Dauid did foreshew concerning Christ. After that he intreateth of the frute or effect. For it was requisite for him to declare that first, that Christ is aliuie. Otherwise it had been an absurd and incredible thing, that he should bee the authour of so great a myracle. Notwithstanding he doth therewithall teach vs that he did not rise for his own sake alone, but that he might make the whole church partaker of his life, hauing powred out the Spirit.

33 *Hee beeing therefore exalted by the right hande of God.* The right hande is taken in this place for the hande or power, in like sort it is taken euerie where in the scripture. For this is his drifte, to declare that it was a wonderfull work of God in that he hath exalted his Christ (whom men thought to be quite destroyed by death) vnto so great glorie. *The promise of the Spirit,* for the Spirit which was promised. For he had oftentimes before promised the Spirit to his Apostles. Therefore Peter doth signifie, that Christe had obtained power of God the Father to fulfill the same. And he maketh mention of the promise in plaine wordes, to the ende the Iewes may knowe that this came not to passe sodainlye, but that the wordes of the prophet were nowe verified, which went long time before the thing it selfe.

Furthermore, whereas it is saide, That he obtained it of the father, it is to be applyed to the person of the Mediatour. For both these are trulie saide, That Christ sent the Spirit from him selfe, and from the Father. He sent him from himselfe; because hee is eternall God: From the Father; because in as much as hee is man, hee receiue that of the Father which he giueth vs. And Peter speaketh wisely according to the capacitie

pacitie of the ignorant, least any man shuld moue a question out of season concerning the power of Christ. And surely forasmuche as it is the office of Christ to direct vs vnto his Father, this is a most apt forme of speaking for the vse of godlinesse, that Christe being placed as it were in the midst betweene God and vs, doth deliuer vnto vs with his owne hande, those giftes which he hath receiued at the handes of his Father. Furthermore, we must note this order that hee sayeth, that the Spirite was sent by Christe after that he was exalted. This agreeth with those sentences: The Spirite was not yet giuen, because Christe was not yet glorified. And againe, Vnlesse I goe hence, the Spirite will not come. Not because the Spirite began then first to be giuen, wherewith the holie Fathers were endued since the beginning of the worlde: but because God did deferre this more plentifull abundaunce of grace, vntil suche time as he had placed Christe in his princely seate: which is signified by this worde *pourred out*, as we saw a little before. For by this meanes the force and frute of Christe his death and resurrection is sealed: and wee doe also thereby knowe that wee haue lost nothing by Christe his departing out of the worlde: because though hee bee absent in bodie, yet is hee present with vs after a better sort, to wit, by the grace of his holie Spirite.

Ioh. 7. 39.

Ioh. 16. 7.

34 For doubtlesse Dauid. Although they might easily gather by the very effect which they sawe with their eyes, that the principalitie was graunted and giuen to Christe, yet to the ende his glory may carrie the greater credite, hee prooueth by Dauid his testimonie, that it was so appointed in times past by God, that Christ should be lifted vppe vnto the highest degree of honour. For these wordes to *sit at the right hand of God*, import as much as to beare the chiefe rule, as we shall afterwarde more at large declare. Yet before he reciteth the prophesie, he saith, That it agreeth onely to Christ. Therefore to the ende the sense may bee more manifest, the sentence must thus runne. Dauid pronounceth that it was decreed by God that a king shoulde sit at his right hand. But this doeth not appertaine vnto Dauid, who was neuer extolled vnto so great dignitie. Therefore he speaketh this of Christe. Furthermore that ought to haue seemed no strange thing vnto the Iewes, which was foretold by the Oracle of the holie Ghost. Hereby it appeareth in what sense Peter denieth, that Dauid ascended into heauen. He intreateth not in this place of the soule of Dauid, whether it were receiued into blessed rest, and the heauenlie dwelling or no: but the ascending into heauen comprehendeth vnder it those thinges which Paule teacheth in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the fourth Chapter, where he placeth Christe aboue all heauens, that he may fulfill al things. Wherfore the disputation concerning the estate of the dead is altogether superfluous in this place. For Peter goeth about to proue no other thing but this, that the prophesie concerning the sitting at the right hand of God, was not fulfilled in Dauid, and that therefore the truth thereof must bee sought elswhere. And for as much as it can bee founde nowhere els saue onely in Iesus Christe: it resteth that the Iewes doe knowe that that is shewed to them in Christ,

which was foretold them so long before. That is true indeed, that Dauid reigned, God being the authour hereof, and in some respect hee was Gods vicegerent; yet not so that he might be aboue all creatures. Wherefore this sitting agreeth to none, vnlesse hee excell and be aboue all the whole world.

The Lorde said vnto my Lorde. This is the most lawfull manner of ruling, when as the king (or by what other title soeuer he be called) doeth knowe that hee is ordeined of God, therefore Dauid pronounceth that the commaundement to reigne, was giuen vnto Christ by name. As if he should say, He tooke not the honour to himselfe rashlie, but did onely obey God when he commaunded him. Now must we see whether Peter his reason be sound enough or no. Hee gathereth that the wordes concerne Christ, because the sitting at the right hande of God, doth not agree to Dauid. It seemeth that this may be refuted, because Dauid did reigne by the peculiar commaundement, name, and helpe of God: which is to sit at the right hande of God. But Peter taketh that for a thing which all men graunt, which is true, and which I haue already touched, that a greater and more royal gouernment is heere spoken of, than that which Dauid did inioy. For howsoener he was gods vicegerent, & did as it were represent his person in reigning, yet is this power farre inferiour to that, to sit euen at the right side of GOD. For this is attributed to Christe, because he is placed aboue all principalitie, and aboue euery name that is named, both in this worlde, and in the world to come. Seeing that Dauid is farre inferiour to the Angels, he doth possesse no such place that he should be counted next to God. For he must ascende farre aboue all heauens, that he may come to the right hand of God. Wherefore no man is said to sit at it, rightlie and properly, saue only hee which doth surpasse all creatures in the degree of honour. As for him which is resident amongst the creatures, although he be reckoned in the order of angels, yet is he farre from that highnesse. Again, we must not seeke the right hande of God amongst the creatures: but it doth also surpasse all heavenly principalities. Furthermore there is great waight euen in the sentence it selfe. This king is commaunded to beare the chiefeest rule, vntill God haue put all his enemies vnder his feete. Surely, although I graunt that the name of such an honourable sitting may be applied vnto earthly Lordship, yet doe I denie that Dauid did reigne vntill such time as all his enemies were subdued. For wee doe heereby gather that the kingdome of Christe is eternall. But the kingdome of Dauid was not onelie temporall, but also frayle, and of a small continuance.

Moreover, when Dauid dyed, hee left manie enemies aliue here and there. He got many notable victories: but he was farre from subduing all his enemies. Hee made manie of those people which were round about him tributaries to him: some did he put to flight, & destroyed: but what is all this vnto all? Finally, wee may prooue by the whole text of the Psalm, that there can nothing els be vnderstood saue only the kingdome of Christ. That I may passe ouer other things, that which is here spoken touching

touching the eternall Priesthood, is too farre disagreeing from Dauid his person. I know what the Iewes doe prattle: that kinges sonnes are called elswher *Cohenim*. But he intreateth here of the priesthood, as it is ascribed by Moses to the king Melchisedech. And there is established by a solemne othe, a certaine newe kinde of priesthood. And therefore we must not heere imagine anie common or ordinarie thing. But it had been wickednesse for Dauid to thrust himself into any part of the Priest his office. How should he then be called *Cohen* greater than Aaron, and consecrated of God for euer? But because I doe not intend at this present to expounde the whole Psalme, let this reason suffice which Peter bringeth, That he is made Lord of heauen & earth, which sitteth at the right hand of God. As touching the second member of the verse, reade those things which I haue noted vpon the fifteenth Chapter of the former Epistle to the Corinthians, concerning the putting of his enemies vnder his feet.

1. Cor. 15.
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36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know. The house of Israel did confesse that that Christ should come which was promised: yet did they not know who it was. Therefore Peter concludeth, that Iesus whom they had so spitefully handled, yea whose name they did so greatly detest, is hee whom they ought to acknowledge to be their Lord, & whom they ought to reuerence. For (saith he) God hath made him Lorde & Christ: that is, you must look for none other, thā him whom God hath made & giuen. Furthermore, he saith, That he was *made*, because God the Father gaue him this honor. He ioyneth the title *Lord* with the word *Christ*, because it was a common thing among the Iewes, that the Redeemer should be annointed vpon this conditiō, that he might be the head of the church, and that the chiefest power ouer all things might be giuen him. Hee speaketh vnto the whole house of Israel: as if he should say, whosoever will be reckoned among the sonnes of Iacob, and doe also looke for the promise, let them knowe for a suretie, that this is he and none other. He vseth the worde *house*, because God had separated that name and familie from all other people. And he saith, *asphalos*, or for a suretie, not only that they may repose their sure confidence and trust in Christe: but that he may take away all occasion of doubting from those which doe oftentimes willingly doubt euen of matters which are certaine & sure. In the end of his oration he vpbraiderth vnto them again, that they did crucifie him, that being touched with greater griefe of conscience, they may desire remedie.

And now forasmuche as they knowe that Iesus is the annointed of the Lorde, the gouernour of the church, and the giuer of the holy ghost, the accusation hath so much the more force. For the putting of him to death was not onely full of crueltie and wickednesse, but also a testimonie of outragious disloyaltie against God, of sacrilege and vnthankfulnessse, and finally, of Apostacie. But it was requisite that they shoulde bee so wounded, least they should haue been slow to seeke for medicine. And yet notwithstanding they did not crucifie him with their owne handes: but this is more then sufficient to make them guilty, in that they desired

Heb. 6. 6.

to haue him put to death. And we also are accused by this same voice; if we crucifie him in our selues, being already glorified in heauen, making a mocke of him, as saith the Apostle, Heb. 6.

37 And when they heard these things, they were pricked in heart, and said vnto Peter, and to the other Apostles: Men and brethren, what shall we doe?

38 Peter saide vnto them, Repent, and bee baptized euerie one of you in the name of Iesus Christe, for the remission of sinnes, and yee shall receiue the gift of the holy Spirit.

39 For the promise appertaineth vnto you, and vnto your children, and vnto all which are farr off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call.

37 They were pricked in heart. Luke doeth now declare the frute of the sermon, to the ende we may know that the power of the holie ghost was not only shewed forth in the diuersitie of tongues, but also in their hearts which heard. And he noteth a double frute: first that they were touched with the feeling of sorrowe, and secondly that they were obedient to Peter his counsell. This is the beginning of Repentance, this is the entrance vnto godlines, to be fory for our sinnes, and to be wounded with the feeling of our miseries. For so long as me are carelesse, they can not take such heed vnto doctrine as they ought. And for this cause the word of God is compared to a sword: because it doth mortifie our flesh, that we may be offered to God for a sacrifice. But there must bee added vnto this pricking in hart, readinesse to obey. Cain and Iudas were pricked in heart, but despaire did keepe them backe from submitting themselves vnto GOD. For the minde being oppressed with horror, can do nothing els but flie from god. And surely when Dauid affirmeth that a contrite spirit, and an humble heart is a sacrifice acceptable to God, he speaketh of voluntarie pricking: forasmuche as there is fretting and fuming mixed with the prickings of the wicked. Therefore we must take a good heart to vs, & lift vp our minde with this hope of saluation, that we may be ready to addict & giue ouer our selues vnto God, & to follow whatsoeuer he shall commaund. We see many oftentimes pricked, who notwithstanding do fret and murmure, or els frowardly striue and struggle, and so consequently goe furiously madde. Yea this is the cause why they goe mad, because they feelee such prickings against their wil. Those men therefore are profitable pricked alone, who are willingly sorrowfull, and doe also seeke some remedie at Gods handes.

38 Peter said. Hereby we see that those do neuer go away empty, which ask at the mouth of the Lord; & do offer themselves vnto him to be ruled and taught: for that promise must needes be true, Knocke, and it shalbe opened vnto you. Therefore whosoever shalbe rightly prepared to learn, the Lord will not suffer his godly desire to be in vaine: for hee his a most faithfull master, so that hee haue scholars which are apt to bee taught & studious. Wherefore there is no cause why he should fear least he suffer vs to be destitute of sound counsell; if we be attentue and readie to hear him: and do not refuse to imbrace whatsoeuer we shall teach vs. And let vs suffer our selues to be gouerned by the counsell & authoritie of those

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Iohn. 15. 16.

Heb. 4. 12.

Gen. 4. 13.

Mat. 27. 3.

Mat. 7. 7.

men, whom he offreth vnto vs to teach vs. For this readie obedience cometh thence so sodainly in those, which addist themselues vnto the apostles, because they are perswaded that they are sent of God to shewe them the way of saluation.

Repent. There is greater force in the Greeke word: for it doth signifie the conuersion of the mind, that the whole man may be reuened, & made another mā. Which thing must be diligently noted, because this doctrine was miserable corrupted in the time of Poperie: for they translated the name of *repentance* almost vnto certain externall rites. They babble somewhat in deed about the feigned contrition of the heart, but they touche that part very sleightly, & they stand principallie vpon the externall exercises of the body, which were little worth: Yea though ther were in the no corruption. But they vrge nothing els in a manner but feigned trifles, wherwith men are wearied in vain. Wherefore let vs know that this is the true Repentance, when a man is reuened in the spirit of his mind, as Paul teacheth, *Rom. 12.* Neither need wee to doubt of this, but that Peter did preach plainly of the force & nature of Repentance: but Luke doth only touch the chief points, and doth not reckon vp the wordes of the oration which he made. We must therefore know thus much, that Peter did at the first exhort the Iewes vnto repentance: & that done he lifted the vp with hope of pardon. For he promised the forgiveness of sins. Which two things are the two parts of the gospel, as we know full well. And therefore when Christ will briefly teach what the doctrine of the Gospel doth contain, he saith that that repentance & remission of sinnes must bee preached in his name; Furthermore, because we are reconciled vnto god, only by the intercession of Christ his death, neither are our sinnes otherwise purged, & done away, saue only by his blood, therefore Peter calleth vs back vnto him by name. Hee putteth Baptisme in the fourth place, as the seale whereby the promise of grace is confirmed: Wherefore wee haue in these few words almost the whole summe of christianitie, namely how a man renouncing himself, & taking his fare well of the world, may addist himself wholly to God. Secondly how he may be deliuered by free forgiveness of sinnes, & so adopted into the number of the childre of God. And forasmuch as we can obaine none of all these things without Christ, the name of Christ is therewithall set forth vnto vs, as the onelie foundation of faith & repentance. And we must also note this, that wee do so begin repentance when we are turned vnto God, that we must prosecute the same during our life. Therefore this sermon must continually sound in the church, Repent not that those me may begin the same, who will be counted faithfull, & haue a place already in the church: but that they may goe forward in the same; although manie do vsurpe the name of faithfull men, which had neuer any beginning of repentance. Wherefore we must obserue this order in teaching, that those which do yet liue vnto the world & the flesh, may begin to crucifie the old man, that they may rise vnto newnesse of life: and that those who are already entred the course of repentance, may continually go forward toward the mark. Furthermore, because the inwarde conuersion of the heart, ought to bring

Rom. 12. 1.

Luk. 24. 47.

Mark. 1. 15.

fourth frutes in the life,repentaunce cannot bee rightly taught,vnlesse works be required: not those friuolous workes, which are only in estimation amongst the Papists, but such as are sound testimonies of innocencie and holinesse.

Be baptised euery one of you. Although in the text & order of the words, Baptisme doth here go before remission of sinnes: yet doth it folow it in order: because it is nothing els but a sealing of those good things which we haue by Christ, that they may be established in our consciences. Therefore after that Peter had intreated of Repentance, he calleth the Iewes vnto the hope of grace & saluation. And therefore Luke well afterwarde in Paul his sermon, ioyneth faith and repentance together in the same sense, wherein he putteth forgiuenesse of sinnes in this place. And that for good considerations. For the hope of saluation consisteth in the free imputation of rightuousnes. And we are counted iust, freely before God, when he forgiueth vs our sins. And as I said before, that the doctrine of repentance hath a daily vse in the church, so must we think of the forgiuenes of sins, that the same is continually offered vnto vs. And surely it is no lesse necessary for vs during the whole course of our life, then at our first entrance into the church. So that it should profit vs nothing, to be once receiued into fauour by God, vnlesse this ambassage should haue a continual course. Be reconciled vnto God: because he which knew no sinne, was made sin for vs, that we might be the rightuousnesse of God in him. Moreouer, the Papists doe so corrupt this other part of the Gospel: that they quite exclude the remission of sinnes, which was to be obtained by Christ. They confesse that sinnes are freely forgiue in baptisme, but they will haue them redeemed with satisfactions after baptisme: & although they mix the grace of Christ together therewithall, yet because they inwrap the same in mens merits, they doe by this meanes ouerthrow the whole doctrine of the gospel. For first they take fro mens consciences the certaintie of faith: that done, forasmuch as they part the forgiuenesse of sinnes between the death of Christ & our satisfactions, they do altogether deprive vs of Christ his benefit. For Christ doth not recõcile vs vnto God in part, but wholly, neither can we obtain remission of sins by him vnlesse it be whole & perfect. But the papists are much deceived therein who restrain baptism vnto the natiuitie & former life, as if the signification & force therof did not reach euen vnto death. Let vs know therefore that forgiuenes of sins is grounded in Christe alone, & that we must not think vpon any other satisfaction saue only that which he hath performed by the sacrifice of his death. And for this cause as we haue already said, doth Peter expresse his name, wherby he doth signifie vnto vs, that none of all these things can be rightly taught, vnles Christ be ser in the midst, to the end the effect of this doctrine may be sought in him. That needeth no long exposition, where he commandeth them to be baptised for the remission of sinnes. For although God hath once reconciled men vnto himself in Christ, by not imputing vnto them their sinnes, and doth nowe imprint in our heartes the faith thereof by his Spirite: yet notwithstanding because baptisme is the seale, whereby hee doth confirme

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2. Cor. 5. 20.

vnto vs this benefite, and so consequently the earnest and pledge of our adoption, it is worthilie saide to be giuen vs for the remission of sinnes. For because we receiue Christs giftes by faith; and Baptisme is a helpe to confirme and encrease our faith, remission of sinnes which is an effect of faith is annexed vnto it, as vnto the inferiour meane. Furthermore we must not set the definition of baptisme from this place, because Peter doth onely touch a part thereof. Our old man is crucified by baptisme, as Paul teacheth, that we may rise vnto newnesse of life. Rom. 6. And againe; wee put on Christ himselfe, 1. Cor. 12. and the Scripture teacheth euery where; that it is also a signe and token of repentance. But because Peter doeth not intreat in this place openly of the whole nature of baptisme, but speaking of the forgiuenesse of sinnes, doth by the way declare that the confirmation thereof is in baptisme, there doth no inconuenience follow, if he do omit the other part.

2. Cor. 5. 19.
Rom. 6. 4. 6.
Galat. 3. 27.

In the name of Christ. Although Baptisme bee no vaine figure, but a true and effectuell testimonie: notwithstanding least any man attriute that vnto the element of water which is there offered, the name of Christ is plainly expressed; to the end we may know that it shalbe a profitable signe for vs then, if we seeke the force and effect thereof in Christ: and know that we are therefore washed in baptisme, because the blood of Christ is our washing. And we doe also hereby gather, that Christ is the marke and end whereunto baptisme directeth vs. Wherefore euery one profiteth so much in baptisme, as he learneth to looke vnto Christ. But heere ariseth a question: Whether it were lawfull for Peter to change the forme prescribed by Christ? The Papists do thinke, at least feigne so, and thence do they take a colour of libertie, to chaunge or abrogate the institutions of Christ. They confesse that nothing ought to be chainged, as touching the substance: but they will haue the Church to haue libertie to chaunge whatsoeuer it will in the forme. But this argument may easily be answered. For we must first know that Christ did not indite and rehearse vnto his Apostles magicall words for inchaunting, as the Papists do dreamer: but he did in fewe wordes comprehend the summe of the mysteric. Again, I denie that Peter doth speak in this place of the forme of baptisme: but hee doeth simplie declare that the whole strength of Baptisme is contained in Christ. Although Christ can not be laid hold on by faith without the Father, by whom hee was giuen vs, and the Spirit, by the which he reneweth and sanctifieth vs. The answer consisteth wholly in this; that hee intreateth not in this place of the certaine forme of baptising, but the faithfull are called backe vnto Christ, in whom alone we haue whatsoeuer baptisme doth presigure vnto vs. For we are both made cleane by his blood, and also we enter into a new life by the benefite of his death and resurrection.

Yee shall receiue the gift of the Spirit. Because they were touched with wondering, when they saw the Apostles sodainly beginne to speake with strange tongues: Peter saith that they shalbe partakers of the same gift, if they will passe ouer vnto Christ. Remission of sinnes, and newnesse of life were the principall things: and this was as it were an addition, that

Christ

Christ should shew forth vnto them his power by some visible gift. Neither ought this place to bee vnderstood of the grace of sanctification which is giuen generally to all the Godlie. Therefore he promiset them the gift of the Spirit; whereof they sawe a paterne in the diuersitie of tongues. Therefore this doth not properly appertaine vnto vs. For because Christ meant to set forth the beginning of his kingdome with those miracles, they lasted but for a time: yet because the visible grace which the Lord did distribute to his, did shewe as it were in a glasse that Christ was the giuer of the Spirit; therefore that which Peter saith, doeth in some respect appertaine vnto all the whole Church: yee shall receiue the gift of the Spirit. For although we doe not receiue it, that

Rom. 10. 10

Iohn. 5. 24.

we may speak with tongues; that we may be prophets; that we may cure the sick; that we may worke miracles: yee is it giuen vs for a better vse, that we may beleeue with the heart vnto righteousness; that our tongues may bee framed vnto true confession: that we may passe from death to life: that we which are poore and empty, may be made rich: that we may with stande Satan in the world stoutly. Therefore the grace of the Spirit shall alwayes be annexed vnto Baptisme, vnto the same. *It becometh our selues, that we should beleeue with the heart, and not onely by the word.* For the promise appertained vnto all. It was a requisite that this should be expressly added; that the heards might certainly thinke and perswade themselves, that the grace of Christ did belong as well to them as to the Apostles. And Peter propounding this, became the promise of God was made vnto them. For we must alwayes looke vnto this because we cannot otherwise know the will of God, saving onely by his word. But it is not sufficient to haue the generall word; vnlesse wee knowe that the same is appoynted for vs. Therefore Peter saith, that those be churche who do the same in faith: and his followers in office, were in times past promised to the Iewes: because this is required necessarie for the certainty of faith, that eueryone be fully perswaded of this, that here is comprehended in the number of those vnto whom God speaketh. Finally, this is the rule of a true faith; when I am thus perswaded, that saluation is mine, because that promise appertaineth vnto me; which offereth the same. And hereby we haue also a greater confirmation, when as the promise is extended vnto those, who were before as farre off. For God had made the covenant with the Iewes: If the force and fruite thereof come also vnto the Gentiles; there is no cause why the Iewes should doubt of themselves; but that they shall finde the promise of God firme and stable. And we must note these three degrees; that the promise was first made to the Iewes; and then to their children; and last of all, that it is also to be imparted to the Gentiles. We know the reason why the Iewes are preferred before other people; for they are as it were the first begotten in Gods familie; yea they were then separated from other people by a singular priuiledge. Therefore Peter obserueth a good order, when he giueth the Iewes the preeminence. Whereas hee adioyneth their children vnto them; it dependeth vpon the wordes of the promise: I will be thy God; and the God of thy seede

seed after thee. Where God doeth reckon the children with the fathers in the grace of adoption. This place therefore doeth abundantly refute the manifest error of the Anabaptists, which will not haue infants which are the children of the faithfull, to bee baptised, as if they were not members of the Church. They espie a starting hole in the allegoricall sense, and they expounde it thus, that by children are meant those which are spirituallie begotten. But this grosse impudency doth nothing helpe them. It is plain and euident that Peter spake thus, because God did adde one nation peculiarly. And Circumcision did declare that the right of adoption was common euen vnto infants. Therefore euen as God made his couenant with Isaac, being as yet vnborne, because hee was the seede of Abraham: so Peter teacheth that all the children of the Iewes are contained in the same couenant, because this promise is alwayes in force. I will bee the God of your seede.

And to those which are a farre off. The Gentiles are named in the last place, which were before strangers. For those which referred vnto those Iewes, which were exiled a farre off and driuen into far countries, they are greatly disceined. For hee speaketh not in this place of the distance of place: but hee sheweth a difference betwene the Iewes and the Gentiles, that they were first ioyned to God by reason of the couenant, and so consequently became of his familie or household: but the Gentiles were banished from his kingdome. Paule useth the same speech in the seconde Chapter to the Ephesians, that the Gentiles which were strangers from the promises, are now drawing neere through Iesus Christ, vnto God. Because that Christ (the wal of separation being taken away) hath reconciled both the Iewes & Gentiles vnto the Father, and comming hee hath preached peace vnto those which were nigh at hand, and which were a farre off. Nowe wee vnderstande Peter his meaning. For to the end he may amplify the grace of Christ, hee doeth so offer the same vnto the Iewes, that hee saith the Gentiles are also partakers thereof. And therefore hee useth this word call, as if hee shoulde saie: Like as GOD hath gathered you together into one peculiar people heretofore by his voyce, so the same voyce shall sounde euerie where, that those which are a farre off, may come and ioine themselves vnto you, when as they shall bee called by a new proclamation.

Ephes. 2. 11.

40 And with many other words did he testifie and exhort, saying: Bee ye saved from this forward generation.

41 Those therefore which willingly embraced his words, were baptized: and there were added that day, about three thousand soules.

42 And they continued in the Apostles doctrine, and in fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers.

43 And with many. Although in these things which wee haue had hitherto, Luke did not recite the wordes of saint Peter, but did onelie briefly

briefly touch the chiefe points: notwithstanding he telleth vs againe in this place, that Peter did not vse doctrine onely, but did add the prickcs of exhortations. And he expresseth plainely that he stooode much here-upon. Whereas hee saith, that he did exhort and beseech, hee noteth therein his earnestnesse. For it was not so easie a matter for them by and by to take their leaue of those errors wherewith they were of late infected, and to shake off the gouernment of the Priests wherunto they were accustomed. Therefore it stood him vpon to pull them violentlie out of this myre. The summe was this, that they should beware of that froward generation. For they could not be Christs vnlesse they would depart from his professed enimies. The Priests and Scribes were then in great authoritie, and for as much as they did couer themselues vnder the visure of the Church, they did deceiue the simple. This did hinder and keepe backe a great manie from comming to Christ. Also some might wauer, & other some might fall away from the right faith. Therefore Peter plainely declareth that they are a froward generation, howsoeuer they make boast of the title of the Church. For which cause hee commaundeth his hearers to separate themselues from them, least they intangle themselues in their wicked and pestiferous fellowship. Whereas he saith Be yee saued, hee signifieth vnto them that they shall surely perish, if they couple themselues with such a plague. And surely experience doth teach vs how miserablie those men are tossed to and fro, who cannot discern the voice of their pastour from the voyce of other men: and againe what an hinderance softnesse and sluggishnesse is to a great manie, whilst they desire to stande in a doubt. Therefore he commaundeth them to depart from the wicked, if they wil be saued. And this point of doctrine is not to bee neglected. For it were not sufficient to haue Christ set before vs, vnles we were also taught to flie those things which do lead vs away from him. And it is the dutie of a good shepheard to defend his sheepe from the wolues. So at this day to the end we may keepe the people in the sincere doctrine of the Gospel, we are euer nowe and then enforced to shew and testifie, howe much papistrie differeth from Christianitie, and what a hurtfull plague it is to bee yoked with the vnfaithfull enimies of Christ. Neither ought Peter to be accused of railing, because he calleth the reuerend fathers, who had the gouernment of the Church in their hands at that day, a *froward generation*. For those daungers which may drawe the soule vnto destruction, are to be shewed by their names. For men will not beware of poyson, vnlesse they know that it is poyson.

41 *They therefore which willingly.* Luke sheweth more plainely howe fruitfull this one sermon which Peter made was: to wit, that it gained vnto Christ about three thousand men. And therewithall he declareth the nature and force of faith, when he saith, that with a prompt and ready minde they embraced his word. Therefore faith must beginne with this readinesse, and willing desire to obey. But because manie doe shew themselues at the first verie willing, who afterward haue in themselues no constancie or continuance: least wee should thinke that it was some

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Sodaine pange which by and by fell away, Luke doth also after ward commend their constancie, who (as he said) did willingly embrace this word of the Apostles, shewing that they were ioyned vnto the disciples, or that they were engrafted into the same bodie, and that they continued in their doctrine. Therefore we must neither be slow to obey, ne yet swift to leape backe: but we must sticke fast and stand stoutly to that doctrine which we did forthwith without any tariance embrace. Furthermore this example ought to make vs not a little ashamed. For whereas there was a great multitude conuerted vnto Christ with one sermon, an hundred sermons can scarce moue a few of vs: and whereas Luke saith that they continued, there is scarce one amongst ten that doth shew euen a meane desire to profite and goe forward, yea rather the more part doth soone loath our doctrine. Woe bee therefore to the sluggishnesse and lightnes of the world.

In their doctrine. Luke doth not onely commend in them the constancie of faith or of godlinesse: but he saith also that they did constantly giue themselves to those exercises, which serue to the confirmation of faith: to wit, that they studied continually to profite, by hearing the Apostles: that they gaue themselves much to prayer: that they did vse fellowship and breaking of breade verie much: as touching praier and doctrine, the sense is plaine. *Communication* or fellowship, and *breaking of bread* may be taken diuersly. Some thinke that breaking of breade doth signifie the Lords supper: other some do thinke that it signifieth almes: other some that the faithfull did banquet together among themselves. Some do thinke that *coionia* doeth signifie the celebrating of the holie supper: but I do rather agree to those others, who thinke that the same is meant by the breaking of bread. For *Coionia* vnlesse it haue somewhat added vnto it, is neuer found in this sense. Therefore I do rather referre it vnto mutuall societie and fellowship, vnto almes, and vnto other duties of brotherly fellowship. And my reason why I woulde rather haue breaking of bread to be vnderstood of the Lords supper in this place, is this, because Luke doth reckon vp those things wherein the publike estate of the Church is contained. Yea, he expresseth in this place fower marks whereby the true and natural face of the Church may be iudged. Do we then seeke the true Church of Christ? The image thereof is liuely depainted and set forth vnto vs in this place. And he beginneth with doctrine which is as it were the soule of the Church. Neither doeth hee name all manner of doctrine, but the doctrine of the Apostles, that is, that which the sonne of God had deliuered by their hands. Therefore wheresoeuer the pure voice of the Gospell doth sound, where men continue in the profession thereof, where they exercise themselves in hearing the same ordinarily, that they may profite: without all doubt there is the Church. Hereby we may easily gather how friuolous the boasting of the Papists is, whiles that they carelessly thunder out with full mouth the name of the Church: whereas notwithstanding they haue most filthily corrupted the doctrine of the Apostles. For if it be duly examined, we shall finde no sound part at all: and in most points they do as much dissent

diffent from the same, and haue as little agreement therewith, as light with darkenesse. The rule of worshipping God, which ought to bee set out of the pure worde of God alone, is onely made and patcht together amongst the papists, of the superstitious inuentions of men. They haue translated vnto the merites of workes, the hope of saluation which ought to haue rested in Christ alone. The inuocation of God is altogether polluted with innumerable profane dotinges of men. Finallic, whatsoeuer is heard amongst them, it is either a deforming of the Apostles doctrine, or else a cleere ouerthrowing and destroying of the same. Therefore we may as easily refute the foolish arrogancie of the papists, as they can cloake their dealings with the tide of the Church. For this shall bee the state: whether they haue retained the puritie of doctrine, from which they are as farre as Hell is from Heauen. But they are wise ynough in that point, because they will haue no controuersie moued about doctrine. But wee as I haue said, may freely contemne that vaine vifure: forasmuch as the Spirit of God doth pronounce, that the Church is principallie to bee esteemed and discerned by this marke, if the simplicitie or puritie of the doctrine deliuered by the Apostles doe flourish and be of force in the same.

In fellowship. This member and the last doe flowe from the first, as fruites or effectes. For doctrine is the bonde of brotherlie fellowship amongst vs, and doth also set open vnto vs the gate, vnto God, that wee may call vppon him. And the supper is added vnto doctrine in steede of a confirmation. Wherefore Luke doeth not in vaine reckon vp these fowre thinges, when as hee will describe vnto vs the well ordered state of the Church. And wee must endeouour to keepe and obserue this order, if we will bee truely iudged to bee the Church, before God and the Angels, and not onely to make boast of the name thereof amongst men. It is certaine that he speaketh of publike praier. And for this cause it is not sufficient for men to make their praies at home by themselues, vnlesse they meete altogether to pray: wherein consisteth also the profession of faith.

43 *And there came feare vppon euery soule, and manie wonders and signes were wrought by the Apostles.*

44 *And all those which beleueed, were ioyned together, and had all things common.*

45 *And they sold their possessions and substance, and did part them to all men, as euery man had neede.*

43 *And there came.* Hee signifieth vnto vs that the shewe and sight of the church was such, that it made others afraid, which did not consent vnto doctrine. And that was done for the preserving and furthering of the Church. When there ariseth any sect, all men set themselues stoutly against the same: and as noueltie is odious, the Iewes woulde neuer haue suffered the Church of Christ to stande one minuite of an houre, vnlesse the Lorde had restrained them with feare as with a bridle. Furthermore Luke noteth the manner of feare, that it was no such feare

as bringeth men vnto the obedience of Christ, but such as causeth men to stande in a doubt, and so consequently doth as it were so binde them hande and foote, that they dare not hinder the Lordes worke. Like as there be some at this day, who will willingly be ignorant of the Gospel: or at least are so holden with the cares of this worlde, that they cannot thoroughly ioyne themselues vnto Christ: and yet they are not so harde hearted, but that they confesse that the trueth is on our side: and therefore the rest is as it were in the midde way, neither doe they fauour the crueltie of the wicked, because they are afraid to strue against God. And whereas hee saith, Euery soule, he speaketh thus by Synecdoche. For it is certaine that many did contemne the hande of God: and that other some were stricken with no great feare, but that they did furiously rage together against the Church. But Luke his meaning was this, that there appeared such power of God in the Church, that the people for the most part had not one word to say.

And many wonders. This member serueth also to the shewing of the cause. For the miracles serued to make them afraide together with other workes of God: although this was not the onely reason, but one of many, why they were afraid to set themselues against God, who was on that side, as they did gather by the myracles: whence wee gather that they are not onely profitable for this, to bring men to God, but also to make the wicked somewhat more gentle, and that they may tame their furiousnesse. Pharao was a man of desperate stubbornnes, and yet wee see how miracles doe sometime pearce his obstinate heart. He forgetteth them by and by, but when the hand of God is heauie vpon him, hee is compelled through feare to yeelde. To bee briefe, Luke teacheth that the Iewes were by this meanes kept backe, that the Church which might easilie haue beene destroied, might haue got vp her heade. Which thing wee haue oftentimes tried euen in our time. And he doth not onely declare that they were bridled with feare, least they shoulde bee so bolde as to attempt so much as they lusted to doe hurt to the Church, but that they were also humbled with reuerence to the glorie of the Gospel.

Exo.8.8.&c
19.

44 *And all.* Whereas I haue translated it *ioyned together*, it is worde for worde in saint Luke, Into the same, or into one, which may be expounded of the place: as if hee should haue saide that they were wont to dwell together in one place. Notwithstanding I had rather vnderstande it of their consent and agreement: as hee will say in the fourth Chapter, That they had one heart. And so hee goeth forwarde orderlie, when as he beginneth with their minde. Hee addeth afterward their bountifullnesse, as a fruite proceeding thence. Therefore hee giueth vs to vnderstande, that they were rightly ioyned together with brotherlie loue amongst themselues, and that they did in deede declare the same, because the rich men did sell their goods that they might help the poore. And this is a singular example of loue, and therefore doth Luke recorde the same, to the ende wee may knowe that wee must relecue the pouertie of our brethren with our plentie.

Actes.4.32.

But

But this place hath needs of a sound exposition, because of fantastick spirits, which do feigne a communalty or participation together of gods, whereby all policie or ciuile gouernment is taken away: as in this age the Anabaptists haue rag'd, because they thought there was no Church vnlesse all mens goods were put and gathered together, as it were in one heape, that they might all, one with another take thereof. Wherefore we must in this point beware of two extremes. For many vnder colour of policie, doe keepe close and conceale whatsoeuer they haue, they defraude the poore, and they thinke that they are twise righteous, so they take away no other mens goods. Other some are caried into the contrary errour, because they would haue all things confus'd. But what doth Luke? Surely he noteth another order, when hee saith, that there was choise made in the distribution. If any man obiekt, that no man had any thing which was his owne, seeing all things were common, we may easily answere. For this communitie or participation together must be restrained vnto the circumstance which insueth immediately: to wit, that the poore might be relieued as euery man had neede. We know the olde prouerbe, All things are common amongst friends, when as the scholers of Pythagoras saide thus, they did not denie but that euery man might gouerne his owne house priuatly, neither did they intend to make their owne wiues common. So that this hauing of thinges common, whereof Luke speaketh, and which he commendeth, doeth not take away household gouernment: which thing shall better appeare by the fourth chap. where as he nameth two alone which sold their possessions, of so manie thousands. Whence we gather that which I saide euen now, that they brought forth and made common their goods in no other respect, saue onely that they might relieue the present necessitie. And the impudencie of the Monkes was ridiculous, who did professe that they did obserue the Apostles rule, because they call nothing their owne: and yet neuerthelesse they neither sell any thing, neither yet doe they passe for any mans pouertie: but they stuffe their idle bellies with the bloode of the poore, neither do they regard any other thing in their hauing of things common, saue onely that they may be wel filled and daintilie, although all the whole worlde be hungrie. Wherein then are they like to the first disciples, with whom they will be thought to be able to compare?

46 *And continuing daily with one accorde in the Temple, and breaking breade from house to house, they did eate their meate with gladnesse, and singlenes of heart,*

47 *Praising God, and hauing fauour with all the people. And the Lorde added daily vnto the congregation, those which should be sau'd.*

46 *Continuing in the Temple.* We must note that they did frequent the Temple for this cause, because there was more opportunitie and occasion offered there to further the Gospel. Neither were they drawne with the holincesse of the place, seeing they knewe that the shadowes of the law were ceased: neither meant they to draw others by their example

ple to haue the Temple in any such reuerence: but because there was there great concourse of people, who hauing laide aside their priuate cares, wherewith they had beene drawne away else where, did seeke the Lorde: they were continually in the Temple, that they might gaine such vnto Christ. There might be another reason which might induce them hereunto, that they might haue a mutuall conference and imparting of doctrine amongst themselves: which they could not haue done so conueniently in a priuate house, especially seeing they were so many.

Breaking bread from house to house. Luke signifieth vnto vs that they did not only shew some token of true godlines, publickly, but that the course & tenor of their priuate life was alone in that respect. For whereas some doe thinke that in this place, by breaking of breade is meant the holie supper, it seemeth to me that Luke meant no such thing. He signifieth therefore vnto vs that they vsed to eate together, and that thriftily. For those which make sumptuous banquets, do not eat their meat together so familiarly. Again Luke addeth, *In singleness* of heart. Which is also a token of temperance. In summe, his meaning is to declare that their manner of liuing, was brotherly and sober. Some doe ioyne simplicitie & gladnesse with the praise of God: and both texts may well bee allowed. But because there can be no singlenesse of heart in praising God, vnlesse the same be also in all parts of the life, therefore it is certaine that there is mention made thereof in this sense, that the faithfull did alwayes vse the same in al places. And we must also note the circumstance of time, that being enuiroed and beset with many dangers, they were merie & ioyfull. The knowledge of Gods loue toward vs, and the hope of his protection do bring vs this goodnesse with them, that we praise God with quiet minds, whatsoeuer the worlde doth threaten. And as Luke spake a litle before of the publike estate of the Church, so he declareth nowe what forme and manner of life the faithfull did vse: that we may learne by their example a thriftie fellowship in our manner of liuing, and in all our whole life to embrace singlenesse, to enioy the spirituall ioy, and to exercise our selues in the praises of God. Furthermore, the singlenesse of heart reacheth farre: but if you ioyne it in this place with breaking of breade, it shall signifie as much as sincere loue, where one man dealeth plainely with an other, neither doeth any man craftilie hunt after his owne profite. Yet had I rather set the same against that carefulesse, wherewith worldly men do too too much torment themselves. For when as wee doe not cast our care vpon the Lorde, this rewarde hangeth ouer our heads, that we tremble and quake euen when we take our rest.

47 *Having fauour.* This is the fruite of an innocent life, to finde fauour euen amongst straungers. And yet wee neede not to doubt of this, but that they were hated of manie. But although hee speake generallie of the people, yet he meaneth that part alone which was sound, neither yet infected with any poison of harred. Hee signifieth briefely that the faithfull did so behaue themselves, that the people did full well like of them for their innocencie of life.

The Lord added daily. He sheweth in these words, that their diligence was not without profit. They studied so much as in them laie, to gather into the Lords sheepefold those which wandered and went astray. He saith that their labour bestowed heerein, was not lost: because the Lorde did encrease his Church daily. And surely whereas the Church is rather diminished than encreased, that is to be imputed to our slothfulness or rather frowardnes. And although they did all of them stoutly labour to encrease the kingdome of Christ; yet Luke ascribeth this honour to God alone, that he broughē straungers into the Church. And surely this is his owne proper worke. For the ministers doe no good by planting or watering, vnlesse hee make their labour effectually by the power of his Spirit. Furthermore wee must note that hee saith, that Those were gathered vnto the Church, which shoulde bee saued. For he teacheth that this is the meanes to attaine to saluation, if wee bee incorporate into the Church. For like as there is no remission of sins, so neither is there any hope of saluation. Furthermore, this is an excellent comfort for all the godly; that they were receiued into the Church, that they might be saued: as the Gospell is called the power of God, vnto saluation, to all that beleue. Nowe for as much as God doth gather onely a part, or a certaine number, this grace is restrayned vnto Election: that it may be the first cause of our saluation.

1. Corin. 3

Rom. 1. 16.

CHAP. III.

• or almost
at that
time.

- N**OW Peter and Iohn went vp together into the temple, about the ninth hower of prayer.
- Furthermore, a certaine man, which was lame from his mothers wombe was carryed: whom they laide daily at the gate of the Temple, which is called Beautifull; that he might aske almes of those which entred into the Temple.
- When hee sawe Peter and Iohn drawe nerc to the Temple, hee asked an almes.
- And Peter beholding him earnestly with Iohn, said, Looke on vs.
- And hee gaue heede vnto them, thinking that he should receiue somewhat of them.
- And Peter said, Siluer and gold haue I none: but such as I haue, giue I thee: In the name of Iesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walke.
- And when he had taken him by the right hand, he lift him vp, and immediately his feete and ankle bones receiued strength:
- And leaping vp he stode, and walked, and entred with them into the Temple, walking and leaping and praising God.
- And all the people saw him walking, and praising God.
- And they knewe him, that it was he which was wont to sit for the almes at the Beautifull gate of the Temple. And they were filled with wondering, and were astonied at that thing which was come vnto him.
- Moreover, when the lame man which was healed, helde Peter and Iohn, all the people were amazed vnto them, into the Porch which is called Solomons.

R We saw before that many signes were shewed by the hands of the Apostles: now Luke reciteth one of many for examples sake, after his common custome: namely, that a lame man, which was lame of his feete from his mothers wombe, was perfectly restored to his limmes. And he doeth diligently gather all the circumstances which serue to set forth the myracle. If it had ben that his legges had bene out of ioynt, or if it had bene some disease comming by some casualltie, it might haue bene the more easily cured. But the default of nature coulede not haue bene so easilie redressed. When as hee saith that hee was carried, we gather thereby that it was no light halting, but that this man did lie as if his legges had bene deade. Forasmuch as he was woont daily to aske almes, heereby all the people might the better know him. In that being healed, he walketh in the Temple at the time of praier, this serued to spread abroad the fame of the myracle. Furthermore this doth not a little set forth the same, that being lift vp and set vpon his feete, he leapeth vp therewithall, and walketh ioyfully.

Went vp together. Because these words *epi to auto*, doth no more signifie place than time, this latter sense seemeth better to agree with the text of Peter, yet because it is of no great importance, I leaue it indifferent. That is called the ninth houre of prayer, when as the day began to drawe towards night. For seeing the day from the rising of the sunne vnto the going downe thereof, had twelue houres, as I haue saide else where, all that time was deuided into foure partes. So that by the ninth, is meant the last portion of the day: as the first houre did continue vnto the third, the third vnto the sixth, the sixth vnto the ninth. Hence may we gather by a probable coniecture, that that houre was appointed for the euening sacrifice. Furthermore if any man aske, whether the Apostles went vp into the Temple that they might pray according to the rite of the law: I do not think that that is a thing so likely to be true, as that they might haue better oportunitie to spread abroad the Gospel. And if any man will abuse this place, as if it were lawfull for vs to vse and take vp superstitious worshippings, whilest that wee are conuersant amongst the ignorant and weake, his reason shall bee friuolous. The Lorde appointed that the Iewes shoulde offer sacrifice, morning and euening. By this exercise were they taught, to beginne and end the day with calling vppon the name of God, and with worshipping him. Therefore Peter and Iohn might freelie come into the Temple, which was consecrated to God: neither did they pollute themselves, seeing they called vppon the God of Israel, that they might thereby declare their Godlinesse. First in that the Lorde woulde haue the olde people to obserue the appointed houres: wee gather thereby that the Church cannot bee without certaine Discipline. And euen at this day were it profitable for vs to haue such meetings daily, vnlesse our too too much sluggishnesse did let vs. And whereas the Apostles go vpp at that houre, heereby wee gather that wee must foreflowe no oportunitie that is offered vs for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Exod. 19.48
Num. 28. 24

3 *He asketh an almes.* We see how God restored this lame man to his limbes contrarie to his expectation. Because he thought that his disease was incurable, hee was onely carefull for maintenance. That is giuen him which he durst neuer haue asked. In like sort God doth oftentimes preuent vs, neither doth he stay vntill he be prouoked. And hence can we not gather any occasion of slothfulnesse, as if the Lorde did therefore meete vs of his owne accorde, that being idle and slothfull we may suffer the Lord to doe good vnto vs. For wee are commaunded to praie, and therefore let vs not foreflowe our ductie. But first of all vnder the person of the lame man, wee haue set before vs an example of a man that is not yet illuminated by faith, that hee may know howe to pray aright. Such doeth God preuent as it is needefull, euen of his owne accorde. Therefore when as he restoreth our soules not onely to health, but also to life, hee himselfe is to himselfe the cause heereof. For this is the beginning of our calling, that hee may make those thinges to bee which are not: that he may shew himselfe vnto those who seeke not after him. Furthermore howsoever wee bee already taught by faith to praie vnto God, yet because wee doe not alwayes feeble our miseries, it commeth not into our minde to seeke for remedie: therefore the Lord bringeth the same freele and vnlooked for. Finallie howsoever wee be bent to pray, yet doeth hee exceede our hope and petitions with his goodnesse.

Rom. 4. 17.

4. *Looke vpon vs.* Peter doth not thus speake, before he be certaine of the purpose and intent of God. And surely in these words he commaundeth him to hope for some singular and vnwoonted benefite: yet heere may a question be moued, Whether they had power to worke myracles so often as they would. I answer that they were ministers of Gods power in such sort, that they did attempt nothing of their owne will or proper motion, but the Lorde wrought by them, when he knewe that it was expedient it shoulde be so. Heereby it came to passe that they healed one and not all. Therefore as in other things they had the Spirite of God to be their guide and director, so also in this point. Therefore before such time as Peter commaundeth the lame man to arise, hee did cast and fasten his eyes vpon him. This stedfast looking vpon him, was not without some peculiar motion of the Spirite. Hereby it commeth to passe, that he speaketh so surely and safely without al feare of the myracle. Furthermore hee meant by this worde to prouoke the lame man to receiue the grace of God: yet doeth hee looke for nothing but for an almes.

6 *Siluer and gold.* Peter doeth truly excuse himselfe, that hee doeth want that helpe which the lame man did require. And therefore doeth hee declare that if hee were able to relieue his pouertie, hee woulde willingly doe it: like as euery man ought to consider with himselfe what the Lorde hath giuen him, that hee may therewith helpe his neighbours. For what store so euer God giueth to euery man, hee will haue the same to bee an instrument and helpe to exercise loue. Therefore hee saith that hee giueth that which hee hath. This was

at the first a trick of mockage, in that Peter beginneth to speake of his pouertie, after that he had brought the lame man into a rare hope, as if he meant to mocke a gaping crowe: but he comforteth him immediately, to the end the miracle might bee had in greater estimation by the comparifon. That is horrible wickednesse, in that the Pope, when as he is created, doeth most vnshamefastly abuse this place, making thereof a comickall or rather a scoffing play. There bee two Celles or places made of stone, in the one whereof when hee sitteth, and the people aske an almes, vsing these wordes of Peter, hee casteth abroade crosses in the aire with his fingers! When hee is brought into the next Cell or place, hee hath bagges full of money. Then his Angels crie vnto him, Hee hath dispersed, hee hath giuen to the poore. I haue made mention hereof, to the ende all men may see that Sathan doth questionlesse reigne there, where they doe so manifestly mocke the sacred worde of God. And to the ende I may returne vnto the former sentence, it is euident ynough, that Peter was instructed by a certaine and sure reuelation, when as hee saith that hee hath the gifte of healing.

Psal. 112.9.

In the name of Iesu. Hee saith that this is the worke and benefite of Christ; that hee restoreth to the creeple the vse of his feete, for Name is taken for power and empire or gouernment. Neither must we dreame that there is any magicall force in the sounding or pronouncing of the worde, as the Iewes doe dote about the worde *Iehouah*. To be short Peter meant to declare that he was nothing but a minister, and that Christ was the author of the myracle. For this ought to haue beene, and was his care, that Christ might bee made knowne vnto the worlde, and that his name might bee sanctified. But why doeth hee giue Christ this Epithete or title of *Nazareth*? I leaue to other men their owne iudgment: but I thinke thus: For as much as Christ was thus called in contempt, Peter meant of set purpose to expresse that that Iesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified, and whose name was dispised and without glorie amongst the Iewes, and was to the most of them detestable, was neuerthelessse the Messias promised of God, and that all power was giuen vnto him of the father: as Paul saith, that he preacheth Christ and him crucified.

1. Cor. 2.2.

Arise and walke. This might seeme to be a very ridiculous thing. For the Creeple might haue readilie objected, Why hast thou not first giuen mee legges and feete? For this is a plaine mocke, when as thou biddest a man without feete, to goe. But he beleued Peter his words: and hee which was at the first so slowe, doeth now with a readie and ioyfull minde embrace Gods benefite. Whereby appeareth both the force of the worde, and also the fruite of faith. The force of the worde is double, both in that the Creeple is so touched, that hee doth forthwith obey without any delay: and in that it giueth strength to his dead members, and doeth after a sort renew the man. And saith also hath her rewarde, in that the creeple obeyeth him which commaunded him to rise not in yaine. Therefore wee see how God worketh by his worde,

to wit, when hee giueth successe to the preaching thereof, that it may pearce into the mindes of men: secondly when he giueth those things with his hand, which are promised there: moreouer hee suffereth not faith to be void, but shee doeth in deede truely enioy all those good thinges, which shee looketh for, and which are offered vnto her in the same worde. And we must remember that which I haue already saide, that wee haue in this historie a type or figure of our spirituall restoring: namely, that as the word laid holde on by faith, did restore the Creeple to his limbes, so the Lorde pearceth into our soules by the worde, that he may restore the same. And first of all he speaketh by mans mouth, and pricketh vs forward vnto the obedience of faith: that done he moueth our hearts inwardly by his spirit, that the worde may take liuelie roote in vs: finally hee reacheth out his hande, and by all meanes he finisheth his worke in vs. We gather out of Matthew that miracles must be thus handled.

9 *And all the people saw.* He beginneth now to declare the fruit of the miracle, to wit, that the creeple began to shewe his thankfullnesse, by praising God, and that all the people were brought into great woondring. And heere is a double fruite. For hee which was healed, doeth acknowledge and set forth the benefite of God, on the other side the people is moued, and the fame is spread abroad, many come to see it. And where as Luke saith, that they were filled with woondring, it doth onely declare a preparation, which a more full proceeding & going forward did at length follow. For it was necessary that they should go forward, because this their woondring had serued to no ende of it selfe, but did rather make them astonied and amazed, than bring them from their owne proceedings vnto God.

Therefore it was as it were the foundation of the building which was to come, in that the people was touched with amazednes. For if we passe ouer the workes of God contemptible or carelesly, we shal neuer be able to profit by them. Furthermore this place doth teach vs, what myracles do work of themselues in men: to wit, that they breede a confused amazednesse. For although the Lord doth call vs streightway vnto himselfe by shewing plainly his goodnes and power there, yet such is the weaknesse of our nature that wee stumble or faint in the midway, vntill such time as we bee holpen by doctrine. Let vs therefore learne reuerentlie to consider the workes of God, that the woondring at them, may make an entrance for doctrine. For when doctrine is colde and vnprofitable with vs, God doeth iustly punish our vnthankfulnesse by this meanes, because we haue despised the glorie of his workes. Again because wee are not so quicke of sight, that wee can see so much in the workes of God alone, as is sufficient, let vs learne to ioyne therewithall the helpe of doctrine. To be brieft, the one ought not to be separated from the other. Which thing experience doth sufficiently teach vs. For heereby it came to passe that the worlde did so wickedlie abuse myracles. The Papistes doe obiekt vnto vs myracles againe and againe. Let vs suppose that they bee true, wherof they make such boast; yet doe they greatly

greatly erre in this, that they wrest them to a wrong ende: to wit, that they may darken the name of God, and infect the pure trueth of the Gospel with their inuentions. For, whence come so many superstitious worshipings of saintes, saue onely from the abuse of miracles? For when any myracle is wrought, men must needs bee moued. And because they are deafe when they shoulde heare the word, and doe not marke what God doth meane, Sathan doeth craftily take an occasion of superstition by our amasednesse. As for example: I will acknowledge the power of God in a myracle. If it were wrought by Peter, Sathan will by and by put this in my heade, and will say thus: Doeſt thou nor see that this is a man of God? therefore thou doeſt owe vnto him diuine honour. The same thing had befallen the Iewes when they were amased, ynllesse Peter his sermon had called them backe into the right way. But in poperie where none did cal them backe or reprove them, the preposterous woondering of men did easily get the vpper hande. Wherefore wee must so much the more seeke for medicine out of the wordes, that doctrine may direct vs vnto the right ende, being listd vp with the myrales.

11 In the porch. It is like that there was a porch builded in that place, where Solomons porch was sometimes, and that it tooke the name thereupon. For the olde Temple was pulled downe, but Zerubbabel and Esdras in the reedifying and newe building of the same Temple had imitated the same: so high as they coulde possiblie deuise. Afterwarde Herod renewed the same, and made it farre more gorgeous, but that vaine cost which hee had bestowed, had not yet blotted out the remembrance of Solomon in the heartes of the people. And Luke nameth the same as a most famous place, whereunto the people ranne togither by heapes to celebrate their feastes vnto God at the times appointed.

12 And when Peter saw that he made answer vnto the people, Men of Israel, why maruell yee at this, or why looke yee so stedfastly vpon vs, as if by our owne power or godlinesse, we haue made this man walke?

13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Iacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his sonne Iesus, whom yee haue deliuered, and whom yee haue denied before the face of Pilate, when he had iudged him to be loosed.

14 But yee haue denied the holy, and iust, and haue desired to haue a murderer giuen you.

15 But yee haue murdered the Prince of life: whom God hath raised vp from the dead: whereof wee are witnesses: and in the faith of his name, his name hath strengthened this man whom yee haue seene and known.

16 And the faith which is by him, hath giuen him this perfect soundnesse, in the presence of you all.

17 Men of Israel He beginneth his sermon with a reproofing of the people. And yet doth he not simplie reprove them because they wonder,

For

for that was altogether profitable and worthie praise: but because they doe wickedly ascribe vnto men that praise which is due to the worke of God. As if hee shoulde say, Yee doe amisse, in that you stay in vs, and stande gasing vppon vs, whereas you ought rather to looke vppon God and Christ. Therefore this is to be amased euillie, when as our mindes doe staie in men. And wee must note that hee condemneth the respect of men. As if, saith hee, wee by our owne power and vertue had done this. Therefore there is an errour and corruption in this, if wee attribute that vnto the godlinesse and power of men, which is proper to God and Christ. And as concerning power, no man will denie that it cometh of God: yet when they haue confessed this in one worde, they do not cease to take from God his right, to the ende they may adorne the creatures with that which they take from him. As wee see the Papistes place the power of God, in the Saintes: yea they include his power in a stone or stocke of woode, so soone as the image is consecrated to Barbara or Chrysogonus. But notwithstanding let vs suppose that they doe not offend in that former member. Yet doe they foolishly thinke that they haue done their duetie toward God, when as they leaue him the power: and assigne the myracles vnto the godlines of Saintes. For why doe they runne vnto them, when they will obtaine either raine or faire weather, or bee deliuered from diseases, vnlesse they doe imagine that they haue by their godlinesse deserued, that God shoulde graunt them this right and priuledge? This is therefore but a childish starting hole, when they confesse that God is the author of the power: but they thanke the godlinesse of Saintes for those benefites which they haue receiued. Howsoever they colour the matter, we must alwayes knowe this, that Peter doeth generally condemne those which doe so looke vnto men in myracles, that they thinke that their holinesse is the cause thereof. This is the first part of the sermon, wherein hee reprocueth superstition. And wee must note this maner and order of teaching. For because men are enclined to nothing more, than to fall from God vnto the Creatures, it is verie expedient to preuent this vice in time. And if the people were forbidden to looke vnto the Apostles, much more doth the Spirit drawe vs away from calling vpon euerie petie Saint.

13. 14. *The God of Abraham.* Hee addeth a remedie nowe, in calling them backe vnto Christ. And the summe is this, that this is Gods purpose in those miracles which he worketh by the Apostles, to set forth the glorie of his Christ. Whereuppon it followeth that all those doe deale disorderlie, who set vp Peter or any other whatsoeuer hee bee, for so much as all men must decrease, and Christ alone must bee excellent. *Iohn. 3. 30.* Heere appeareth a manifest difference betweene Christ and the Apostles. First of all hee is the authour, they are onely the ministers. Secondly, this is the lawfull ende, that hee alone may haue the glorie: and as for them, there is no respect to bee had of them as concerning glorie. For certainly, they which doe glorifie any in myracles besides Christ, they set themselues flatlie against the counsell of God.

He maketh mention of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, to the ende he may declare vnto the people; that hee meaneth nothing lesse, than to lead them away from the old and auncient worship of the true God, which they had receiued of the Fathers. Furthermore, God hath giuen himselfe this title, that he might disseuer and distinguish himself by some marke from Idols. For wee doe not comprehend God in his essence which cannot be seen, and which is infinite. Therefore hee vseth such meanes as agree best with vs, to bring vs to the knowledge of him. The Turkes doe boast that they do worship God, which is the Creator of heauen and earth; but before they come at heauen, they vanish away. Therefore to the end God might keepe his people from vaine and erroneous inuentions, he kept them in his couenant. Therefore when he calleth himselfe the God of Abraham, he did briefly teach that which Moses declareth more at large: Say not, Who shall ascend into heauen: who shall goe downe into the depth? Or who shall saile ouer the Seas? The worde is nigh, &c. Furthermore, as amongst the Iewes the name of the holy Fathers was in high estimation, so Peter doth closely tel them, that they were no better than other men; without the only begotten sonne of God. And at this day God will bee known by a more euident marke yet, when as he calleth himselfe the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ. Let vs now returne vnto Peter. He saith that he bringeth in no new religion, that he may draw away the people from the law and the Prophets. For if he should attempt this, God had forbidden them to heare him. Deut. 13. 3. Like as Paule teacheth, that we must retaine one foundation in the spiritual building: because so soone as we depart euen but a little from Christ, there can nothing ensue but ruine. And hereby also we may easily discern in what sense he calleth God the god of the Fathers. For neither doth he take this for a generall *maxime*: that what manner worship soeuer the fathers had, wee must continue the same: as the Papists doe foolishly vaunt; that they doe follow the manner of worshipping, which was vsed amongst the fathers. For Peter doth expresse reckon vnto Abraham, Isaac, and Iacob, from whom true religion did proceed, and by whom it was diuinely deliuered, whereby hee doeth signifie vnto vs, that we must not follow all fathers: whereof manie did growe out of kinde, and became altogether vnlike to the first fathers, that this honor is due to the children of God alone, and that others are to bee refused. Which thing the Prophets doe also bear in euerie where: Walk not in the waies of your fathers, &c. *Whom ye haue deliuered.* Hee mingleth with doctrine a most sharpe chiding, according as the matter did require. For it was impossible to bring them truly vnto God, vnlesse they were first brought to the knowledge of their sinnes. Neither doth he only lightly touch them, but hee doeth very grauely shewe them the horrible nesse of that offence, which they had committed. To this ende tendeth that comparison, that they deliuered him to be put to death, whom Pilate would haue loosed. And againe, that pardoning a murderer, they put the prince of life to death: that they did relect the iust & holy. Men must bee so stricken, that being brought

Deut. 30. 12

Deut. 13. 3.

1. Cor. 3. 11.

Eze. 20. 18.

brought to knowe their guiltines, they may earnestly flie vnto the remedie of pardon. Such vehemensie and earnestnesse did Peter also vse in his first sermon. He saith afterward that God raised him vpp. Whereby they ought to know, that in putting Christe to death, they did striue against God. Although Peter had respect vnto an higher thing: to wit, that their crueltie did no whit impaire the glory of Christ: because God had neuertheless restored him to life. When as he saith, that he and his fellowes in office were witnessers of the resurrection, his meaning is, that they saw it with their eyes. Therefore this is referred not onely vnto the Apostolicall function, but because they saw Christe with their eyes after that hee was risen from the dead. Although I doe also graunt that this seconde thing is comprehended vnder these wordes: Because it is likely that Peter doeth make mention of that function which was committed vnto him; to the ende hee may purchase the greater authority.

And in the faith of his name. When as he saith, In the faith of his name, and His name, and again, The faith which is by him, this repetition is a token of a feruent affection. For because hee was wholie giuen to set forth the glorie of Christe, hee heateth in the same thing oftentimes. Moreover wee see that when Paule is occupied about the shewing and setting forth of the grace of Christ: he thinketh that he hath neuer spoken enough touching the same. And surely, such is the wicked nature of men, that Christ cannot be so highly extolled; & so preached; that his honour can remaine sounde vnto him. Let vs therefore remember, that Peter did vse such varietie and plentie of wordes, to the ende he might stay vs in Christ. As touching the phrase, when as he saith, *his name*, in the faith of his name, hath strengthened, hee sheweth both the cause, & the manner. The power of Christ had healed the Creeple, but by faith. When as he saith, the faith which is by him, by this worde hee signifieth vnto vs, that our faith cannot arise vp vnto God, vntlesse it bee grounded in Christ, and so consequentlie that this our faith doth look vnto Christ and stay it selfe vpon him, and so he sheweth that there can bee no right faith in God, when we passe ouer this meane.

Furthermore, as he said before, that he and the other Apostles were witnessers of Christes life: so he doth now declare that this life was manifestly proued vnto the Iewes by a signe or effect: because they see the creeple healed, in whom they hadde an excellent and euident token of the diuine power of Christ. And when as in this last member he maketh faith the cause of this soundnesse, hee sheweth vnthankfulnesse to their charge by the way, vntlesse they giue faith her due prayse. And although faith may be referred as well vnto the man that was healed, as vnto the Apostles, yet we neede not to stand much about this matter, because the power of the Gospell is set forth by Synecdoche.

And now brethren, I knowe that through ignorance you did it: as did also your rulers. And God hath fulfilled all thinges which hee had spoken by the mouth of his prophets.

19 *prophets, that Christe should suffer.* And hee be *God* willing they should
 19 *Repent therefore, and bee converted, that your sinnes may be forgiven:*
 20 *When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and*
 20 *hee shall send him that was* *preached before, Iesus Christe.*
 21 *Whom heauen must containe vntill the time that all thinges bee restored,*
 21 *which he hath spoken by the mouth of all his holie prophet, since the beginning*
 21 *of the worlde.*

“O set be-
 fore your
 eyes, & re-
 presented.

17 *Because it was to be doubted least being cast down with despaire,*
 they should refuse his doctrine, he doth a little lift them vp. We must so
 temper our sermons that they may profit the hearers. For vnlesse there
 be some hope of pardon left, the teriour and feare of punishment doeth
 harden mens heartes with stubbornesse. For that of Dauid is true, That
 we feare the Lord when wee perceiue that he is vnto vs fauourable and
 easie to be pacified. Thus doth Peter lessen the sinne of his nation, be-
 cause of their ignorance. For it had been vnpossible for them to haue
 suffered and endured this conscience, if they hadde denied the sonne of
 God, and deliuered him to be slaine, wittinglie, and willinglie. And yet
 wil he not flatter them, when as he saith, That they did it through igno-
 rance: but he doth only somewhat mitigate his speech, least they should
 be ouerwhelmed and swallowed vp of despayre. Againe we must not so
 take the wordes as if the people did sin simplie of ignorance: for vnder
 this there did lie hid hypocrisie: but as wickednesse or ignorance doth
 abound, the action is named of the one or the other. This is therefore
 Peter his meaning, that they did it rather through error & a blind zeal,
 than through any determined wickednesse. But a question may be mo-
 ued here, If any man haue offended wittinglie and willinglie whether he
 shal surely fall into dispaire or no? I answere, that he doth not make me-
 tion in this place of all maner of sin, but only of the denying of Christ, &
 of the extinguishing of the grace of God, so much as in them did lie. If
 any man be desirous to know more concerning this, he may read the first
 chapter of the first epistle to Timothie.

Psal 130.4.

1. Tim. 1. 13

As did also your rulers. First this seemeth to be an vnproper compa-
 rison. For the Scribes and the priests were caried headlong with a won-
 derful madnes, and they were full of wicked vnfaithfulnesse: but the per-
 uerse studie & zeale of the law did prick forward the people. Again the
 people were incensed against Christ, in as much as their rulers did pro-
 uoke them thereunto. I answere, that they were not all of one minde: for
 without dour many of the were like vnto Paul, vnto whō that doth trulie
 appertaine, which hee writeth elsewhere of the princes and rulers of this
 world, if they had knowen the wisdom of God, they would neuer haue
 crucified the Lord of glory. Therefore he speaketh not generally of al the
 rulers: but if any of them be curable, them doth he inuite to repentance.
 18 *And God.* Hereby it appeareth more plainly to what end he made
 mentio of ignorance. For when he telleth the that God hath accomplished
 those things which he had foretold, he doth so touch their offence in the
 death of Christ, that it turneth to their saluation. Ignorance, saith hee,
 hath

hath made you giltye: yet God hath brought, that to passe which he had determined, that Christ should redeeme you by his death. This is a most notable consideration, when as we ponder and consider with our selues, that through the wonderfull counsell of God, our euils are turned to another ende to vs. Yet this doth no whit excuse vs. For so much as in vs lyeth, we cast away our selues by sinning: but that conuersion, whereof I haue spoken, is a notable worke of gods mercy, whereof we must speak, and which we must extol with humilitie. The Iewes did what they could to extinguishe all hope of life in the person of Christe. And yet neuertheless that death gaue life as well to them, as to all the whole worlde. We must also remember that which we sawe elswhere, least there should any false and absurde opinion creep in, that Christ was laid open to the lust of the wicked, that God is made the chiefe authour, by whose wil his only sonne did suffer.

19. *Repent.* We must note that when he exhorteth vnto repentance he doth also declare that there is remission of sinnes prepared for them before the face of God. For as I said of late, no man can be stirred vp to repentance, vnlesse he haue saluation set before him; But he which doth despaire of pardon, being as it were giuen ouer vnto destruction already doth not feare to runne headlong against God obstinately. Heereby it commeth to passe that the Papists cannot deliuer the doctrine of repentance. They babble indeed very much concerning the same: but because they ouerthrow the hope of grace, it cannot bee that they shoulde perswade their disciples vnto the studie of repentance. Moreouer I confesse that they babble a litle touching forgiveness of sinnes; but because they leaue mens soules in dout and in fearefulnesse, and furthermore do cast them as it were into a Labyrinth, or place out of which they knowe not how to come, this part of the doctrine being corrupt, they confound the other also.

20. *That when.* If we followe Erasmus and the olde interpreter, this sentence shalbe vnperfect, which may be made perfect, thus. When the time of refreshing shall come, you may also enioy this refreshing. When Christ shall come to iudge the world, you may find him a redeemer and not a iudge. But because Beza doth fitly translate it, After that they shal come: it is better to retaine that which is not so rackt: so you resoluethus: that sinnes are forgiven against the day of the last iudgement: because vnlesse we be cited to appeere before Gods iudgement seat, we are not greatly carefull to pacifie God. First of all we must note, that he setteth before them the day of iudgement, to the end the former exhortation may take the greater effect. For there is nothing which doth more prick vs, than when we are taught that we must once giue an account. For so long as our senses are holden & kept in this world, they are drowned as it were in a certain drowsines, that I may so call it. Wherefore the message of the last iudgement must sound as a trumpet to cite vs to appeare before the iudgement seat of God. For then at last being truly awaked we begin to think of a new life. In like sort when Paule preached at Athens: God saith that he doth now will all men to repent: because he hath

hath appointed a day wherein he will iudge the worlde. The summe is this, that Christe who is now vnto vs a master, when as hee teacheth vs by the Gospell, is appointed of the Father to be a iudge, and shall come in his due time: and that therefore we must obey his doctrine betimes, that we may gather the frute of our faith then. But some man may object, that Peter speaketh otherwise of the last day. For this doeth not serue to make them afraid, when he saith, *the time of refreshing*. I answere, that there is a double prick, wherewith the faithful are pricked forward when as they are told of the last iudgement. For the profite of faith doth not appeare in this worlde, yea rather it seemeth to goe well with the despisers of God: but the life of the godlie is full of miseries. Therefore our heartes should oftentimes faint and quail, vnlasse we should remember, that the day of rest shall come, which shall quench all the heate of our trouble, and make an end of our miseries. The other pricke whereof I spake, is this, when as the fearefull iudgement of God causeth vs to shake off delicacie and drowynesse. So Peter mixeth in this place threatenings with promises, partly to the end hee may allure the Iewes vnto Christ, and partly that he may pricketh them forward with feare. Furthermore this is a thing much vsed in the scripture, as it speaketh eicher vnto the reprobate, or vnto the elect, sometimes to make the day of the Lord dolefull and fearefull, sometime to make the same pleasant and to be wished for. Peter therefore doth very well, who whilst that hee putteth the Iewes in good hope of pardon, doeth make the day of Christe pleasant to them, to the end they may desire the same.

And shall send him. He saith expresly, that Christ shalbe iudge, to the ende they may know that the contempt of the Gospell shal not be vnplished. For how should not Christ punish the same? In the meane while this doth greatly comfort the faithful, when as they know that it shall be in his hand to giue saluation, who doth nowe promise and offer the same. He addeth moreover that he shal come, who is now preached vnto them. Whereby he taketh away all excuse of ignoraunce. As if hee should say, Christ is preached vnto you nowe, before hee come to iudge the worlde: to the end that those who will embrace him, may receiue the frute of their faith at that day: and to the end that others who shall refuse him, may be punished for their vnbeliefe. Although the Grecians do read this two waies. For som books haue *procecerugmenon* that is preached before: & other some, *procecheinismenon* that is shewed or set before their eyes. But both haue one sense: to wit, that Christ is not offered vnto them in vaine nowe by the doctrine of the Gospell; because he shall be sent the second time by his father, to be a iudge armed and prepared to render vengeance, vnlasse they embrace him nowe for their Redemer.

Whom the heauen must containe. Because mens senses are alwaies bent and inclined toward the grosse and earthly beholding of God and Christe, the Iewes might think with themselues, that Christe was preached in deed to be raised vp from the dead, yet could they not tell where he was, for no man did shew them where he was. Therefore Peter preuenteth

teeth them, when he saith, that hee is in heauen. Whereuppon it followeth, that they must lift vp their minds on high, to the end they may seeke Christ with the eyes of faith, although hee bee farre from them, although he dwell without the world in the heauenly glory. But this is a doubtful speech: because we may as wel vnderstand it, that Christe is contained or comprehended in the heauens, as that hee doth comprehend the heauens. Let vs not therefore vige the word, being of a doubtfull signification: but let vs content our selues with that which is certaine; that wee must seeke for Christ no where els saue only in heauen, whiles that we hope for the last restoring of all things: because he shall be far from vs, vntill our mindes ascend high about the world.

Vntill the time of restoring. As touching the force and cause, Christe hath already restored all things by his death: but the effect doth not yet fullie appeare: because that restoring is yet in the course, and so consequently our redemption, for as much as we do yet grone vnder the burden of seruitude. For as the kingdome of Christ is only begun, and the perfection thereof is deferred vntill the last day, so those things which are annexed thereunto, doe nowe appeare only in part. Therefore if at this day wee see manie things confused in the worlde, let this hope set vs vppon foote and refrethe vs, that Christ shall once come, that he may restore all things. In the meane season, if wee see the reliques of sinne hang on vs, if we be inuironned on euery side with diuers miseries, if the world be full of wasting and scarteting a broad, let vs bewaile these miseries, yet so that we be vpholde with the hope of restoring. And this is the reason why Christe doth not appeare by and by, because the warfare of the church is not yet full, whose time seeing it is appointed by God, it is not for vs to preuent the same.

Which hee sake. I do not expound this of the times alone; but I refer it vnto the whole period: so that the sense is this; that whatsoeuer he had spoken before of the kingdome of Christ, is witnessed by all the prophetes. Certes the Gospell doth winne no small credite heereby, that so soone as God began to shew himselfe to the worlde, he did alwayes set Christ before them: after that he began to speake vnto the Fathers, he did alwayes lay this foundation of doctrine. By the same argument Paul commendeth the Gospell both in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romanes, and also in the end, to wit, that it is no newe thing, but promised eue from the beginning. This is true antiquitie, which is able to purchase credite to doctrine: when as God himselfe is the authour, the holy Prophetes the witnesses: and the continuall course of times confirmeth the testimonie. This confirmation was especially necessarie for the Iewes, who being brought vp in the doctrine of the law, ought to admit nothing but that which agreeth therewith. Therefore Peter doth commaunde them only to call to minde those things which the prophetes haue testified of Christe.

Moses saide vnto the fathers: The Lord your God shall raise vp a prophet vnto you of your brethren in him shall ye heare according to all things which

Rom. I. 1. &
16. 25.

hee

hee shall speake vnto you.

23 And it shall come to passe, that euerie soule which shall not heare this prophet, shall be destroyed of the people.

24 And al the prophets from Samuel, & thencefoorth as many as haue spoken, haue likewise foretolde these dayes.

22 By this argument he proueth, that hee goeth not about to cause them to reuolt from Moses, because it is a part of the law to take heed to and obey this chief teacher. Here might a doubt arise, why Peter thought it more conuenient to cite this testimonie of Moses than others; seeing there were many other in readinesse far more plain: but he did this for this cause, because hee intreateth in this place of the authoritie of doctrine. And this was the best way to bring the Iewes to be Christ his disciples. For he should haue preached in vaine of all other things, vnlesse they had been perswaded, that his doctrine was reuerently to be receiued. This is therefore the thing which Peter aimeth at, to bring them to heare Christ willingly, as the master who God hath appointed to teach them. But here ariseth a question which hath in it great difficultie: to wit, in that Peter applieth that vnto the person of Christ; which Moses spake generally of the prophets. For although he make mention of a prophet in the singular number, yet the text doth plainley declare, that he speaketh not of one alone: but that this worde is put indefinitely. For after that Moses had forbiddē the people to giue them selues vnto the superstitions of the Gentiles; by turning aside vnto enchaunters & soothsayers, he sheweth them that withall a remedie, whereby they may auoid all vanitie: to wit, if they depend wholely vpon the word of God alone. By this meanes he promisseth that God will be carefull at all times to sende them prophets, that they may teach the aright. As if he should say, God will neuer suffer you to be destitute of prophets, of whom you may learn whatsoeuer shall be profitable for you to know. And Moses saith expressly, of thy brethren, to the end the Iewes may know that the oracles of God are to bee sought and fet no where els, seeing that God had appointed vnto them teachers of the kinred of Abraham. Hee addeth further, like vnto me: that they may know that they were not to heare God onely at one time, or by the mouth of one man: but as God proceedeth to teach vs by diuers ministers, throughout the continuall course of times, so must we hold on in the obedience of the word. Nowe the Iewes were wont to reuerence Moses; therefore he will haue them to giue like honour to the prophets. I know that many would faigne restraîne it vnto Christe. They catch at this word, whereas Moses doth testifie that the prophet shall be like vnto him: whereas notwithstanding it is writtē that ther arose none like vnto Moses. I confesse that there is in both places the same note of likenes, yet in a diuers sense. For in the second place the likenes or equallitie is expressed, as it doth plainly appeare. They catch also at another thing, that the prophet shal far excel Moses, of who he beareth witness as a crier or harold, but this is neuer a whit stronger: because Moses goeth about to bring to passe, that the word of God may be beleeued by whomsoeuer it be brought.

Deut. 18. 15

Ther.

Therefore ther is no cause why we should set our selues to be laughed to scorn by the Iews, by wresting the words of Moses violently, as if he spake of Christ alone in this place. Yet must wee see, whether Peter doth cite the testimonie fitlie, whose authoritie ought to serue for a sound reason. I say that in Peter his speech there is nothing which is not most conuenient. For he saw that which all men ought to graunt, that this testimonie doth so appertain vnto the other Prophets, that yet notwithstanding it doeth chiefly commend Christ, not only because that he is the prince and chiefe of all the Prophets, but because all other former prophetes were directed toward him, and because God did at length speake absolutely by his mouth. For God spake in diuers maners, & at sundrie times in times past, vnto our fathers by the Prophetes, he added the conclusion at length, in the last dayes, in his only begotten sonne. Therefore it came to passe, that they wanted prophetes for a certaine yeeres before his comming: which thing is plainly gathered out of the wordes of Malachie: who after that he hath commaunded the people to be mindfull of the law, he passeth ouer by & by vnto Iohn Baptist & vnto Christ: as if he should say, that the prophetes are now ended vntill the last reuelation come: according to that, The law and the prophetes prophesied vntill Iohn: after that the kingdom of God is preached. And that was so common amongst the people, that the woman of Samaria could say according to the common fame and opinion, We know that the *Messias* shall come, who will teach vs all things. Therefore we know that after the returne of the people, all the prophetes ceased, to the end they might be made more attentiu to heare Christe, by that silence or intermission of reuelations. Therefore Peter did not wrest this place, or abuse the same through ignorance, but he tooke that doctrine which all men had receiued for a principle: that god had promised to teach his people at the first by his prophetes as by means, but at length principally by Christ, at whose hands they were to hope for the perfect manifestation & laying open of all things: And to this purpose serueth that excellent testimony, or commendation wherewith his father setteth him forth, Heare him.

Mat. 17. 5.

23 *Euerie soule.* Here, by a most greuous punishment against the rebellious, the authority of all the prophetes, but most of all of Christ is established. And that for good causes: For seeing there is nothing that God doth account more precious than his worde, it cannot be that he should suffer the same to be freely contened. Therefore if any man despised the lawe of Moses, he was adiudged to die the death. And hereunto Moses had respect when he said, He shall be put away from among the people. For God had adopted the stock and kindred of Abraham vnto himself, vpon this condition, that this might bee sufficient for them vnto the chiefest felicitie to be reckoned in that number, as it is said in the Psalme, Blessed is the people whose god is the Lord. And in another place, Blessed is the nation whom the Lorde hath chosen to be his inheritance. Wherefore it is not to be doubted, but that he pronounceth that he shall be blotted out of the booke of life, whosoever shall refuse to heare Christ. For he is not worthie to be accounted one of the church, whosoever he be that refuseth

Heb. 1. 1. 2.
Malac. 4. 4.
Mat. 11. 13.
Iohn. 4. 25.

31. 8. 1. 1. 1. 1.

fufeth to haue him to be his maſter, by who alone God doth teach vs, & by whom he will haue vs to heare himſelf: and he cutteth himſelfe away from the bodie, whoſoeuer he be, that refuseth to be vnder the head.

24 And all. When as he ſaith that all the prophetes doe with one conſent ſend their ſcholars vnto Chriſte: that appeareth more plainly hereby which I ſaid, that the commendation of the Goſpel is contained vnder that teſtimony of Moſes, and ſo conſequently that the concluſion of prophecies is principally noted. Again this maketh much for the certaintie of the Goſpel, that al the prophets for a long time do yet notwithstanding ſo temper their forme of teaching with one conſent, that they doe teſtifie all together, that men ought to hope for a certaine better, and more perfect thing. Therefore whoſoeuer will belecue Moſes and the prophets, he muſt needs ſubmit himſelf vnto the doctrine of Chriſt, without which, all that is lame and vnperfect which they taught. Ioh. 5. 47.

25 You are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, ſaying vnto Abraham, And in thy ſeede ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed.

26 God raiſed vp vnto you firſt his ſonne Ieſus, and hee ſent him bleſſing you, whiles that he doth take away euery one from his finnes.

25 You are the children. He ſignifieth that the grace of the covenant was appointed principally for them, which couenaunt God made with their fathers. And ſo as he pricked them forward to obey the Goſpell by terrifying them with the terror of puniſhment, ſo he allureth them now againe to receiue the grace which is offered them in Chriſt. So that we ſee how that God omitteth nothing whereby he may bring vs vnto himſelfe. And it is the dutie of a wiſe miniſter, ſo to pricke forward the ſluggiſh and ſlow bellies, that he doe lead thoſe gently, which are apt to bee taught: wee muſt alſo note diligently this courſe of teaching, where Peter ſheweth that the Goſpell is assigned and appointed vnto the Iewes. For it is not ſufficient to haue the mercie of God preached vnto vs generally, vnleſſe we alſo know that the ſame is offered vnto vs by the certaine ordinance of God. For this cauſe is it that Paule ſtadeth ſo much vpon the auouching of the calling of the Gentiles, becauſe if any man ſhould thinke, that the Goſpell came vnto him by chaunce, when as it was ſcattered here and there, faith ſhoulde quaille: yea there ſhould bee only a doubtful opinion in ſteed of faith. Therefore to the ende wee may ſtedfaſtly beleue the promiſe of ſaluation, this application (that I may ſo terme it) is neceſſarie: that God doeth not caſte foorth the vncertaine voyces, that they may hang in the ayre, but that he doth direct the ſame vnto vs by his certaine & determinate counſel. Peter telleth the Iewes, that Chriſte is promiſed vnto them after this ſort, to the end they may more willingly embrace him. And how proueth he this? becauſe they are the children of the prophets and of the covenant. Hee calleth them the children of the Prophets, which were of the ſame nation, and therefore were heyres of the covenant, which did belong vnto all the whole
G body

Rom. 15. 8.
Eph. 3. 3. &
4.

Gen. 17. 7.

bodie of the people. For he argueth thus: God made his couenaunt with our fathers: Therefore wee which are their posteritie, are comprehended in the couenaunt. Whereby the doubting subtiltie of the Anabaptists is refuted, who do expound the children of Abraham only allegorically: as if God had had no respect to his stock, when he saide, I will be the god of thy seed. Certainly Peter doth not speake in this place of the shadowes of the law: but he affirmeth that this is of force vnder the kingdome of Christ, that God doth adopt the children together with the fathers: and so consequently the grace of saluation may be extended vnto those which are as yet vnborne. I graunt in deed that many which are the children of the faithfull, according to the flesh, are counted bastardes, and not legitimate, because they thrust themselues out of the holy progenie through their vnbeleef. But this doth no whit hinder the Lord from calling & admitting the seede of the godly into fellowship of grace. And so although the common election be not effectual in all, yet may it set open a gate for the special elect. As Paul intreateth in the 11. to the Romanes, whence we must fet an answer for this question.

Rom. 9. 7.

Rom. 11. 23.

And in thy seed. He proueth that the couenant was made with the Fathers, because God said vnto Abraham, In thy seed shal all nations bee

Gen. 22. 18.

Gal. 3. 16.

blesed. But if we admit Paul his interpretatiō, this testimonie shal make nothing for the present cause. Paul teacheth that Christ is this seede. If the blessing be promised to all mankind by Christ, what is this to the especial or particular priuiledge of one nation? Secōdly Peter himself seemeth shortly after to subscribe to this expositiō of Paul, when as he saith that Christ was sent, that in him the Iewes may be blessed. For this could not be, vnles Christ were that blessed seed. I answer, When Paule referreth it vnto Christ, he standeth not vpon the word *seed*, but hee hath respect to an higher thing: to wit, that it cannot be one seed, vnles it be vnited & knit together in Christ, as in the head. For Ismael & Isaac althogh both of the be the sonnes of Abraham, yet do they not make one seed: because they be diuided into two people. Therefore though many be estranged frō the family of Abraham, which came of him according to the flesh, yet Moses noteth one certain body, whē he promiseth the blessing vnto the seed of Abraham. And whence cometh the vnity, saue only from the head which is in Christ? In this sense doth Paul vnderstande this worde *seed*, of Christ, althogh it be a nowne collectiue, because if you depart frō him, the posteritie of Abraham shall be as torne members, neither shall there be any thing els in them, saue only meere wastnes & scattering abroad. Peter agreeth with that doctrine, because he doth so extende the blessing vnto all the people, that he doth neuertheles seek the fountain in Christ. Secondly forasmuch as the Iewes doe what they can to wring from vs this testimonie, the godly Readers must arme theselues against their caills: & so much the rather because christian writers haue beene too slack in this point: as I haue said in the epist. to the Galathians. First as touching the word *seed*, there is no cause why they should prattle that Paul doth not rightly restraine it vnto Christ. For hee doth not this simply, but in that respect whereof I haue spoken. In which point I confesse both our latine & Greeke interpreters haue erred. Now we must see

what this maner of speech doth import. The Gentiles shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham. Our men think that there is some cause noted, to wit, that through that seed the Gentiles shalbe blessed. The Iewes toll this to & fro, because this phraseth signifieth euery where in the scriptures an exāple or similitude: as on the other side to be cursed in Sodom, in Israel, or in an other people, is to take them for a notable example of a curse. I answer that it is a doubtful speech, & taken diuersly according to the circumstance of the places. which the Iewes do craftily dissemble. For they gather many places, out of which they proue that there is a cōparison made: as if it should be said, The gentiles shall desire to be blessed like to the seed of Abraham. But when as the scripture saith elswhere, They shall blesse themselves in the liuing God: as Iere. 4. Esay 65. And againe, do blesse in the name of the Lorde, Deut. 10. and in other such like places: who doth not see that there is a cause expressed? Therefore I say that this forme of speech ought to bee vnderstood according to the circumstances of the places. And now forasmuch as I haue declared that the seed of Abraham can be found no where els saue only in Christ, it remaineth that we cōsider of what sort the office of Christ is. So shall it appear vndoubtedly, that he is not made a bare example or patterne, but that the blessing is trulie promised in him: because without him we be all accursed. Yet ther remaineth one dout. For certes both these are spokē in one sense: They shall be blessed in thee, &, In thy seed. But Abraham was nothing els but a type or myrror of the blessing. I answer that in the person of Abraham that body is also noted out, which dependeth vpon one head & is knit together in the same.

Iere. 4. 2.
Esay. 65. 16.
Deut. 10. 8.

All the families. The Iewes do grossly expound this, that all nations shal desire to be blessed, as the seed of Abraham. But wee say otherwise, That they shalbe ingrafted into the societie. For the name of Abraham tended to this end, because it should come to passe that god shuld gather al people vnto him. Also when the prophets will declare the force hercof, they foretell euery where that the inheritance of saluation shall be common to the Gentiles. And heereby it appeareth, that the couenaunt of God, which was then proper to the Iewes alone, is not only cōmon to all men but is made with vs expressly. Otherwise we could not cōceiue that hope of saluation which is firme enogh out of the Gospel. Therefore let vs not suffer this promise to be wrong from vs, which is as it were a solemne declaration, whereby the Lord maketh vs his heires together with the fathers. Whereunto Peter also had respect, when as he saith shortly after, That Christ was first sent vnto the Iewes. For hee doth signifie that the Gentiles also haue their order, though it be secundarie.

26 *He hath raised vp his sonne.* He gathereth out of the words of Moses that Christ is now reuealed. But the wordes do seeme to import no such thing: yet doth he reason fitly thus, because the blessing could no otherwise be, vnles the beginning therof did flowe from the Messias. For wee must alwaies remember this, that all mankind is accursed, and therefore there is a singular remedie promised vs, which is performed by Christ alone. Wherefore he is the onely fountaine & beginning of the blessing. And if sobeit Christ came to this end that he may blesse the Iewes first,

Num. 6. 27.
Heb. 7. 1. 6.

and secondly vs, he hath vndoubtedly done that which was his dutie to doe, and we shall feele the force and effect of this dutie in our selues, vnlesse our vnbeleefe doe hinder vs. This was a part of the Priest his office vnder the lawe, to blesse the people: and least this should bee onlie a vaine ceremonie, there was a promise added: as it is Numb. 6. And that which was shadowed in the olde priestthoode, was truely perfourmed in Christ. Concerning which matter we haue spoken more at large in the seuenth chapter to the Hebrewes. I like not Erasmus his translation. For he saith, When he had raised him vp, as if he spake of a thing which was done long agoe. But Peter meaneth rather, that Christ was raised vppe, when he was declared to be the author of the blessing: which thing since it was done of late and sodainly, it ought to moue their minds the more. For the scripture vseth to speake thus, as in the last place of Moses, whereunto Peter alludeth. To raise vp a prophet, is to furnish him with necessary giftes to fulfil his function, and as it were to preferre him to the degree of propheticall honour. And Christ was raised vp then, when he fulfilled the functiō enioyned him by his father, but the same thing is done daily when he is offered by the Gospell that he may excell amongst vs. We haue said that in the Aduerbe of order, *first*, is noted the right of the first begotten, because it was expedient that Christ should beginne with the Iewes, that he might afterward passe ouer vnto the Gentiles.

Whiles that he turneth. Hee doth againe commend the doctrine of repentance, to the end we may learne to include vnder the blessing of of Christ newnes of life, as when Esaias promiseth that a redeemer should come to Sion, he addeth a restraint, Those which in Iacob shall be turned from their iniquities. For Christ doth not do away the sins of the faithful, to the end they may graunt liberty to themselves to sin vnder this colour: but he maketh the therewith all newe men. Although we must diligently distinguish these two benefittes which are linked together, that this ground worke may continue, that we are reconciled to God by free pardon. I knowe that other men turne it otherwise: but this is the true meaning of Luke. For he speaketh thus word for worde: in turning euery one from his wickednes.

CHAP. III.

- 1 **A**ND as they spake vnto the people, the priestes, and the gouernour of the temple, and the Sadduces came vpon them,
- 2 Taking it greuously that they taught the people, and preached in Iesus name, the resurrection from the dead.
- 3 And they laid hands on them, and they put them in prison vntill the morowe. For it was now euentide.
- 4 And many of those which had heard the word beleued: and the number of men there was about five thousand.

I In this narration we must consider three things chiefly. That so soone as the truth of the Gospel doth once appeare, Satan setteth himselfe

self against the same on the other side so much as he is able, & attempteth all things that he may smoulder the same in the verie first beginnings. Secondly that God doth furnish his children with vnuincible force and strength, that they may stande stedfast and vnmoueable against all assaults of Satan: and not yeeld vnto the violence of the wicked. And last of all we must note the euent and end, that howsoeuer the aduersaries seem to beare the chiefeest swindge, & they themselues do omit nothing which may serue to blot out the name of Christe: and on the other side howsoeuer the ministers of sound doctrine be as sheep in the mouths of wolues: yet doth god spread abroad the kingdome of his sonne, he fostereth the light of the gospel which is lighted, & he is the protector of his children. Therefore so often as the doctrine of the Gospell ariseth, and diuers motions do rise on the other side, and the course thereof is letted diuers waies, there is no cause why godly mindes should faint or quaille as at some vnwonted thing: but they ought rather to remeber that these are the ordinary endeouors of Satan, so that we must think vpon this wel, before it come to passe, that it cannot otherwise bee, but that Satan will spue out all his might & main, so often as Christ doth come abroad with his doctrine. And therewithall let vs consider that the constancie of the apostles is set forth vnto vs for an example, least being overcome either with any perils, or threatnings, or terrors, we leape back from that profession of faith which the Lord requireth at our hands. And moreover, let vs comfort our selues with this, that wee need not to doubt but that the Lord wil giue prosperous successe, whē we haue done our duty faithfully.

¶ *And as they spake.* Hereby it appeareth how watchful the wicked be: because they are alwaies ready at an inch to stop the mouth of the seruants of Christ. And vndoubtedly they came together as it were to quēch some great fire. Which thing Luke signifieth, when as hee saith that the ruler or captain of the temple came also, and hee addeth moreover that they tooke it greuously that the apostles did teach. Therefore they came not vpon the by chaunce, but of set purpose: that according to their authoritie they might restrain the apostles & put them to silence. And yet they haue some shew of law & equitie. For if any man did rashly intrude himself, it was the office of the high priest to repress him: & also in like sort to keep the people in the obedience of the law & the prophets, & to preuent all new doctrines. Therefore when they heare vnknown men, & such as had no publik authority, preaching vnto the people in the temple, they seeme according as their office did require, & they were commanded by God to adresse themselues to remedie this. And surely at the first blush it seemeth that there was nothing in this action worthie of reprehension: but the end doth at length declare that their counsell was wicked, & their affection vngodly. Againe it was an hard matter for the Apostles to escape infamie and reproch, because they being priuate & despised persons, did take vpon the publike authority. To wit, because when things are out of order, many things must be assaied contrary to the common custome: & especially when we are to auouch & defend religion & the worship of God. & the ringleaders theselues do stop alwayes, & doe

abuse that office against God, which was committed vnto them by god. The faithfull chāpions of Christe must swallow vp & passe through this ignominy in poperie. For a thousand sommers will go ouer their heads, before any reformation or amendniement will wax ripe amongst them for the better. Therfor Luke standerh vpon this point, when as he saith that they were greued, because the resurrectiō was preached in the name of Christ. For hereupon it foloweth that they did hate the doctrine. before they knew the same. He expresth the Saduces by name, as those which were more couragious in this cause. For they were almost a part of the Priests: but because the question is about the resurrection, they set them selucs against the apostles more thā the rest. Furthermore this was most monstrous confusion amongst the Iewes, in that this sect which was so profane, was of such authority. For what godlines could remaine, whē as the immortalie of the soul was couēted as a fable & that freely? But mē must needs run headlōg after this sort, whē they haue once suffred pure doctrin to fal to the ground amongst thē. Wherefore we must so much the more diligently beware of euerie wicked turning a side, least suche a step downe follow immediately. Some men thinke that the ruler of the temple was chosen from among the priestes: but I doe rather thinke that he was some chiefe captaine of the Roman armie. For it was a place which was fortified both naturally and artificially. Again, Herod had builded a tower there, which was called *Antonia*. So that it is to be thought that he had placed there a band of souldiers, and that the Romaine Captaine had the gouernment of the Temple: least it should be a place of refuge for the Iewes, if they had stirred vppe any tumult, which wee may likewise gather out of Iosephus. And this agreeth very wel that the enemies of Christ did craue the help of the secular power, vnder colour of appeasing some tumult. In the meane season they seeke fauour at the handes of the Romanes, as if they were carefull to maintaine the right of their empire.

4 *And many of them which heard.* The Apostles are put in prison, but the force of their preaching is spread farre and wide, and the course therof is at libertie. Of which thing Paule boasteth very much, that the worde of God is not bound with him. And here we see that Satan & the wicked haue libertie graunted them to rage against the childre of God: yet cā they not (maugre their heads) preuaile, but that god doth further and promote the kingdome of his sonne, Christ doth gather together his sheepe, and that a few men vnarmed, furnished with no garrisons, do shew forth more power in their voice alone, than al the whole world by raging against thē. This is in deed no common work of God, that one sermon brought forth such plentifull frute: but this is the more to be wondered at, that the faithfull are not terrified with the present danger, and discouraged from taking vp the crosse of Christe together with the faith. For this was a hard beginning for nouices. Christ did more euidentlie declare by this efficacie and force of doctrine, that he was aliue, than if he should haue offered his bodie to be handeled with hand, and to be seen with the eyes. And wheras it is said that the number of those which belecued

beleueed, did growe to be about fūe thousand, I do not vnderstand it of those which were newly added, but of the whole church.

- 5 And it came to passe that the next day their rulers, and elders, & Scribes were gathered together at Ierusalem.
- 6 And Annas the highest priest, and Caiphas, and Iohn, and Alexander, and so many as were of the kindred of the priestes.
- 7 And when they had set them before them, they asked them: In what power, or in what name haue ye done that?
- 8 Then Peter, being filled with the holy Ghost, said vnto them, Yee rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,
- 9 If we be iudged this day for healing the man which was lame, by what meane he is made whole:
- 10 Be it known vnto you all; and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Iesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye haue crucified, whom God hath raised vppe from the dead, this man standeth before you whole.
- 11 This is the stone which was refused of you the builders; it is placed in the head of the corner.
- 12 Neither is there saluation in any osher. Neither is there any other name giuen vnder heauen vnto men, wherein we must be saued.

5 It is a thing worthie to be noted in this place, that the wicked do omit no subtiltie that they may blot out the Gospell and the name of Christ, & yet do they not obtain that which they hoped for: because god doth make their counsels frustrate. For they make an assemblie where-in they doe all thinges so tyrannously, that yet notwithstanding luste beareth a shew of right, and libertie is driuen farre away, and at length, the truth may seem to be condemned by good right. But the Lord bringeth vpon them a sodain feare, so that they dare not do that which they can, and which they do most of all desire: whatsoeuer the Apostles shall bring in defence of their cause, that shall remaine buried and shut vppe with the walles, where there is none which doth beare them any fauour. And therefore there is no place left for the truth. Yet wee see how the Lord bringeth their counsell to nought, whiles that beeing kept backe with feare of the people, they stay themselues and bridle their furie, to the ende they may auoid enuie. But I maruell much why Luke doeth make Annas the highest priest in this place, seeing that it appeareth by Iosephus, that this honour was not taken from Caiphas, vntill Vitellius had entred Ierusalem to beare rule, after that Pilate was commanded to depart vnto Rome. All men graunt that the Lord was crucified in the eighteenth yeere of Tiberius. And that empire did continue foure yeres longer. And it must needs be, that there were 3. yeres complete after the death of Christ, before Pilate was put from the office of the proconsull. For when Tiberius was dead, he cameto Rome: So that Caiphas was hie priest yet 3. yeeres after the death of Christ. Wherefore it is to be thought that that wherof Luke speaketh in this place, did not happé immediatly after the resurrectiō of Christ. Althogh the doubt canot thus be answered.

For Iosephus reporteth that Ionathas was chosen into the place of Caiphaz: but because this Ionathas was the sonne of Annas, it is a thing not vnlike to bee true, that the sonne was called by the name of the father: as Caiphaz also had two names: for they did also call him Ioseph.

7 *In what power.* They do yet seeme to haue some zeale of God. For they feigne that they are carefull that the honor due vnto God, may not bee giuen to any other. Name is taken in this place for authoritie. In summe, they deal as if they were most earnest defenders & maintainers of Gods glory. In the mean season their importunateenes is wonderful, in that they go about to driue the apostles to make deniall, by asking many questions concerning a manifest matter, & to wring out by fear some other thing than they had confessed. But God doeth bring their craftie wilinesse to naught, & maketh them heare that which they would not.

8 *Peter being filled with the holy Ghost.* It is not without great cause that Luke addeth this, to the ende wee may know that Peter spake not with such a maiestie of himself. And surely seeing hee had denied his master Christ, being afraid at the voice of a siclie woman, he should haue vtterly fainted in such an assembly, whē he did only behold their pomp, vnles he had been vpholden by the power of the Spirite. He had great need of wisdom & strength. He excelleth in both these so much, that his answer is in deed diuine. He is another maner of man here than he was before. Furthermore this profiteth vs two maner of wayes. For this title or commendation is of no small force to set foorth the doctrine which shall followe immediatly, when it is saide that it came from the holy God. And we are taught to craue at the hands of the Lord the Spirit of wisdom and strength, when we make profession of our faith, to direct our hearts & minds. The fulnes of the spirit is taken for a large & no cōmō mesure.

9 *If we be indged.* Vndoubtedly Peter layeth tyrannie to the charge of the Priestes & the Scribes, because they examine them vnjustly concerning a benefite which deserueth praise, as if he and his felow had committed some haynous offence. If saith he, wee bee accused for this cause, because we haue made a sick man whole, Peter hath in this place more respect vnto the wicked affection of the mind, than vnto the very order of the question. For if vnder colour of a miracle, the Apostles would haue drawen away the people from the true & sincere worshippe of God, they should haue been worthily called to answer for themselves: because religion doth far excell all the good thinges of this present life. But seeing they (hauing no cause at al) did wickedly make an offence of that which they ought to haue honored: Peter being supported with this cōfidence doth at the first gird them wittily with a taunting preface, because they sit as iudges to condemne good deedes. Yet he toucheth this point but lightly, that he may passe ouer vnto the matter.

10 *Be it knowē vnto you.* Peter might (as I haue alredy said) haue turned aside vnto many starting holes, if hee would not haue entred the cause: but because the myracle was wrought, to this ende, that the name of Christ might be glorified, he descendeth by and by vnto this. For hee knewe that he was the minister of such excellent power of GOD that he

he might haue a seale to confirme his doctrine. In the meane while the wicked, will they nill they, are enforced to heare that which they would haue had buried full deepe. When they haue done what they can, this is all, they cause Peter to auouch and obieſt to their faces, that wherewith they were ſo grieued, when it was ſpoken to others. And firſt he maketh Chriſt the authour of the myracle. Secondly becauſe it ſeemed to be an abſurde and vncredible thing, that a deade man ſhould bee endued with diuine power, he teſtifieth that Chriſt is aliue, becauſe God hath raiſed him vp from the deade, howſoeuer they had crucified him. So that the myracle giueth him occaſion to preach the reſurreſtion of Chriſt. And by this teſtimonie Peter meant to prooue, that he was the true Meſſias. He ſaith that they had crucified him, not onely to the end he may vpbraide this vnto them, that they may acknowledge their fault: but alſo that they may vnderſtand, that they haue in vaine ſtriuén againſt God: and ſo conſequently ceaſe to rage ſo vnluckely and with ſuch deadly ſucceſſe.

11 *This is the ſtone.* He confirmeth by teſtimonie of Scripture that it is no new thing, that the ringleaders of the Church, which haue glorious titles giuen them, and haue the chiefe roome in the Temple of God, haue notwithstanding wickedlie reieſted Chriſt. Therefore hee citeth a place out of the hundreth and eighteenth Pſalme: where Dauid complaineth that he is reieſted of the Captaine of the people, and yet notwithstanding hee boasteeth that hee was choſen of God, to haue the chiefe roome. Moreouer hee compareth the Church or the ſtate of the kingdome by an vſuall metaphor to a building. Hee calleth thoſe which haue the gouernment, the maſters of the woorke, and hee maketh himſelfe the principall ſtone, whereon the whole building is ſtaied and grounded. For that is meant by the head of the corner. Therefore this is Dauids comfort, that howſoeuer the Captaines haue reieſted him, ſo that they would not graunt him euen the beſt place, yet did not their wicked and vngodlie endeuours hinder him from being extolled by God, vnto the higheſt degree of honour. But that was ſhadowed in Dauid, which God would haue perfectly expreſſed in the Meſſias. Therefore Peter dealeth very aptly, when as he citeth this teſtimonie, as being ſpoken before of Chriſt as they knew full well that it did agree properly to him. Now we know to what end Peter did cite the Pſalme: to wit, leaſt the Elders and Prieſtes being vnaduieſedly puffed vp with their honor, ſhould take to themſelues authoritie and libertie to allowe or diſalow whatſoeuer they would. For it is euident that the ſtone reſuſed by the chiefe builders, is placed by Gods owne hande in the chiefe place, that it may ſupport the whole houſe. Furthermore this hapneth not once onely, but it muſt bee fulfilled daily: at leaſt it muſt ſeeme no new thing, if the chiefe builders do euen now alſo reieſt Chriſt. Whereby the vaine boaiſting of the Pope is plainly reſuted, who maketh his boaiſt of the bare title, that he may vſurpe whatſoeuer is Chriſts. Admit we graunt to the Pope and his horned beaſts that which they deſire, to wit, that they are appointed to bee ordinarie paſtours of the Church, they

Pſa. 118. 22.

1. Cor. 3. 12.

they can go no farther at length, than to be called chiefe builders with Annas and Caiphas. And it is euident what account ought to be made of this title, which they think is sufficient to mixe heauen & earth together. Now let vs gather out of this place som things which are worth the noting. For as much as they are called master builders who haue gouernment of the Church, the name it self putteth them in mind of their dutie. Therefore let them giue themselves wholly to the building of the temple of God. And because al men do not their dutie faithfully as they ought, let them see what is the best maner of building aright, to wit, let them retaine Christ for the foundation: that done, let them not mixe straw and stubble in this building, but let them make the whole building of pure doctrine: as Paul teacheth in 1. Cor. 3. Whereas God is saide to haue extolled Christ, who was reiected of the builders, this ought to comfort vs, when as we see euen the Pastors of the church, or at least those which are in great honor, wickedly rebell against Christ, that they may banish him. For we may safely set light by those visures, which they obiekt against vs: so that we need not feare to giue Christ that honor, which god doth giue to him. But if hee winke for a time, yet doeth he laugh at the boldnes of his enimies from on high, whiles they rage & fret vpon earth. Furthermore though their conspiracies be stronge and garded with all aides, yet must we alwayes assure our selues of this, that Christ his honor shall remaine safe and sound. And let the fruit of this confidence ensue also, that we be valiant and without feare in maintaining the kingdome of Christ, whereof God will be an inuincible defender, as he himselfe affirmeth. We haue alreadie spoken of Peter his constancie, in that, one simple man, hauing such enuious iudges, and yet hauing but one partner in the present danger, sheweth no token at all of feare, but doth freelie confesse in that raging and furious companie, that thing which he knew would be receiued with most contrary minds. And whereas he sharplie vpbraideth vnto the wickednes which they had committed, we must fet from hence a rule of speech, whē we haue to deale with the open enimies of the truth. For we must beware of two faults on this behalf, that we seeme not to flatter by keeping silence or winking: for that were treacherous silence, whereby the truth should be betrayed. Againē, that we be not puffed vp with wātonnes, or immoderate heat, as mens minds do oftentimes break out more then they ought, in contention. Therefore let vs vse grauitie in this point, yet such as is moderate: let vs chide freely, yet without al heate of railing. We see that Peter did obserue this order. For at the first he giueth an honorable title: when hee is once come to the matter hee inueigheth sharplie against them: neither could such vngodlines as theirs was, bee concealed. Those which shal follow this example, shall not onely haue Peter to be their guide, but also the spirit of God.

"Or more particular.
"Orgenerrall.

12 *Neither is there saluation in any other.* Hee passeth from the *species* vnto the "*Genus*:" and he goeth from the corporall benefit, vnto perfect health. And assuredly Christ had shewed this one token of his grace, to the end he might be knowne to bee the onely author of life. Wee must

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consider this in all the benefites of God, to wit, that he is the fountaine of saluation. And he meant to pricke and sting the Priests with this sentence, whē as he saith that there is saluation in none other saue only in Christ, whom they went about to put quit out of remembrance. As if he should say, that they are twise damned, who did not onely refuse the saluation offered them by God, but endeuour to bring the same to naught, and did take from all the people the fruit and vse thereof. And although he seemeth to speake vnto deafe men, yet doth he preach of the grace of Christ, if peradventure some can abide to heare: if not, that they may at least be deprived of all excuse by this testimonie.

Neither is there any other name. He expoundeth the sentence next going before. Saluation (saith he) is in Christ alone: because God hath decreed that it should be so. For by Name he meaneth the cause or mean: as if he should haue said, For as much as saluation is in Gods power only, he wil not haue the same to be common to vs by any other means, then if we aske it of Christ alone. Whereas he saith *vnder heauen*, they do commonly referre it vnto creatures: as if he should say, that the force and power to saue, is giuen to Christ alone. Notwithstanding I do rather thinke that this was added, because men cannot ascende into heauen, that they may come vnto God. Therefore seeing we are so farre from the kingdome of God, it is needfull that God doe not onely inuite vs vnto himselfe, but that reaching out his hand, he offer saluation vnto vs, that we may enioy the same. Peter teacheth in this place, that he hath done that in Christ, because he came downe into the earth for this cause, that he might bring saluation with him. Neither is that contrary to this doctrine that Christ is ascended aboue all heauens. For hee tooke vpon him our flesht once for this cause, that hee might be a continuall pledge of our adoption. He hath reconciled the father to vs for euer by the sacrifice of his death: by his resurrection he hath purchased for vs eternal life. And he is present with vs now also, that he may make vs partakers of the fruite of eternall redemption: but the reuealing of saluation is handed in this place, and wee knowe that the same was so reuealed in Christ, that we neede not any longer to say, Who shall ascend into heauen? Rom. 10. And if so bee this doctrine were deeply imprinted in the mindes of all men, then shoulde so many controuersies concerning the causes of saluation, be soone at an ende, wherewith the Church is so much troubled. The Papistes confesse with vs, that saluation is in God alone, but by and by they forge to themselues infinite wayes to attaine vnto the same. But Peter calleth vs backe vnto Christ alone. They dare not altogether denie that wee haue saluation giuen vs by Christ: but whiles they feigne so manie helpes, they leaue him scarce the hundredth parte of saluation. But they were to seeke for saluation at the handes of Christ, wholly: for when Peter excludeth plainly all other meanes, hee placeth perfect saluation in Christ alone, and not some parte thereof onelie. So that they are farre from vnderstanding this doctrine.

Ephc. 4. 10.

Rom. 10. 6.

- 13 And when they saw the boldnesse of Peter and Iohn, and considered that they were men vnlearned and ignorant, they wondered, and they knewe them that they had beene with Iesus.
- 14 And when they saw the man that had beene healed standing with them, they could not say against it.
- 15 But when they had commanded them to depart out of the councell, they consulted among themselves,
- 16 Saying, *What shal we do to these men?* For a manifest signe is done by them, and it is openlie knowne to all the inhabitants of Ierusalem, neither can wee denie it.
- 17 But leaſt it bee noised any farther among the people, in threatening let vs threaten them, that they ſpeake not hence forth to any man in this name.
- 18 And then when they had called them, they charged them that they should not ſpeake at all, or teach in the name of Iesus.

13 Here may we ſee an euill conſcience: for being deſtitute of right & reaſon, they break out into open tyranny, the hatred whereof they had aſſaied to eſcape. Therefore he doth firſt declare that they were conuiſt, that it may appeare that they did war againſt God wittingly & willingly like Gyants. For they ſee a manifeſt worke of his in the man which was healed, and yet do they wickedly ſet themſelues againſt him. In as much as they knowe that Peter and Iohn were men vnlearned and ignorant, they acknowledge that there was ſomewhat more than belongeth to man, in their boldneſſe: therefore they are enforced to wonder whether they will or no. Yet they breake out into ſuch impudencie, that they feare not to ſeek ſome tyrannous meanes to oppreſſe the truth. When as they confeſſe that it is a manifeſt ſigne, they condemne themſelues therein of an euill conſcience. When they ſay that it is knowne to al men, they declare that paſſing ouer God, they haue reſpect vnto men onely. For they bewray their want of ſhame thereby, that they would not haue doubted to turne their backe, if there had beene any colour of deniall. And when they aſke what they ſhall doe, they make their obſtinate wickedneſſe knowne vnto al men. For they would haue ſubmitted themſelues vnto God, vnleſſe diuellish furie had carried them away to ſome other purpoſe. This is the Spirit of giddines and madneſſe, wherewith God doeth make his enimies drunke. So when they hope ſhortly after that they can by threatnings bring it about, that the ſame ſhall goe no farther, what can bee more fooliſh? For after they haue put two ſimple men to ſilence, ſhall the arme of God be broken?

17 *In threatening let vs threaten.* Here may wee ſee what a deadly euill power, void of the feare of God is. For when that religion and reuerence which ought, doth not reigne, the more holy the place is which a man doth poſſeſſe, the more boldly doth he rage. For which cauſe wee alwayes take good heed that the wicked bee not preferred vnto the gouernment of the Church. And thoſe which are called to this function, muſt behaue themſelues reuerently and modeſtly, leaſt they ſeeme to be armed to do hurt. But and if it ſo happen they abuſe their honor, the
Spirit

Spiriite declareth there as in a glasse, what small accompt wee ought to make of their decrees and commaundementes. The authoritie of the Pastors hath certaine bounds appointed, which they may not passe. And if they dare be so bolde, we may lawfully refuse to obey them, for if we should, it were in vs great wickednes: as it followeth now.

- 19 And Peter and Iohn answered them, & said, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken vnto you rather than to God, iudge yee.
 20 For we cannot but speake those things which we haue seene and heard.
 21 And when they had threatened them, they let them go finding nothing for which they might punish them, because of the people: for all men did glorifie God, because of that which was done.
 22 For the man was more then fortie yeares olde, on whom the signe of healing was shewed.
 23 Furthermore when they were let goe, they came to their fellowes, and tolde them whatsoeuer things the Priestes and Elders had said.

19 *Whether it be right.* Let vs remember to whom they make this answer. For this council did vndoubtedly represent the Church: yet because they do abuse their authoritie, the Apostles say flatly that they are not to be obeyed. And (as men vse to do in an euident matter) they referre ouer the iudgement vnto their aduersaries, for a reproch vnto them. Furthermore it is worth the noting, that they set the authoritie of God against their decrees. Which thing should be done out of season, vnlesse they were the enemies of God, who notwithstanding were otherwise the ordinarie Pastors of the Church. Moreouer the Apostles expresse a farther thing also, to wit, that the obedience which men vse toward euill and vnfaithful Pastors, howsoeuer they holde the lawfull gouernement of the Church, is contrarie to God. This question doth the Pope aunswere pleasauntly, because he saith that all those things are diuine oracles whatsoeuer it hath pleased him to blunder out vnadvisedly. By this meanes the daunger of contrarietie is taken away. But the Bishops can challenge no more at this day, than God had giuen then to the order of the Priestes. Therefore this is a toy too childish, That they can commaund nothing but that which is agreeable to the commaundement of God. Yea rather the thing it selfe declareth euidently, that there shall be no conflict then, if they suffer their vaine and vnbridled lust to raunge freely, hauing vanquished and renounced the doctrine of Christ. Therefore by what title soeuer men be called, yet must we heare them onely vpon this condition, if they leade vs not away from obeying God. So that we must examine all their traditions, by the rule of the worde of God. We must obey princes and others which are in authoritie: yet so, that they robbe not God (who is the chiefe king, Father, and Lord) of his right, and authoritie. If we must obserue such modestie in politike gouernemente, it ought to bee of farre more force in the spirituall gouernement of the Church. And least according to their wonted pride, they thinke that their authoritie is
 abated

abated, when God is extolled aboue them, Peter draweth them away from such pleasant flattering of themselves, telling them that this matter must be determined before the iudgement seat of God, for he saith plainlie, Before God: because howsoever men be blinded, yet wil God neuer suffer any man to be preferred before him. And surely the Spirit did put this answer in the mouth of the Apostles, not onely to the end he might repress the furiosnes of the enemies, but that he might also teach vs what we ought to do, so often as men become so proud, that hauing shaken off the yoke of God, they will lay their owne yoke, vpon vs. Therefore let vs then remember this holy authoritie of God, which is able to driue away the vaine smoake of all mans excellencie.

20 *For we cannot.* Manie things which are found out by hearing and seing, may yea ought to bee concealed, when as the question is concerning the redeeming of peace. For this is a point of discourtesie and of wicked stubbornnes to moue and raise a tumult about vnecessary matters: but the Apostles doe not speake generally, when as they say they cannot but speak. For the Gospel of Christ is now in hand, wherein consisteth both the glory of God, and the saluation of men. It is an vnmeet thing and sacrilegious wickednesse, that the same should be suppressed by prohibitions and menacings of men: for God commandeth that his Gospel be preached: especially sythence they did know that they were chosen to be witnesses & preachers of Christ: and that God had opened their mouth. Therefore whosoever putteth them to sylence, he inuoluereth so much as he is able to abolish the grace of God, and fordo the saluation of men. And if so be it a prohibition so wicked doe stoppe our mouthes, wo be to our sluggishnes. Now let all men see what confession God requireth at their hands; least when they keepe silence because of men, they heare a fearefull voice proceede out of the mouth of Christ, whereby their vnfaithfulnes shalbe condemned. And as for those which are called vnto the office of teaching, let the be terrified with no threatnings of men, with no colour of authoritie, but let them execute that office which they knowe is ioyned them by God. Woe be vnto me, saith Paul, if I preach not the Gospel: because the function is committed vnto me. Neither ought we only to set this commandement of god against the tyrannous commandements of men: but also against all lets which Satan doth oftentimes thrust in, to breake off and hinder the course of the Gospel. For we haue need of a stronge buckler to beare off such fore assaults, which al the ministers of Christ do feel: but howsoever we speed this is a brasen wall, that the preaching of the Gospel doth please God: and therefore that it can for no cause be suppressed.

1. Cor. 9.

21 *And when they had threatened them.* And here is the end of sedition, that the wicked cease not to breath out their furie, yet are they bridled by the secrete power of God, so that they cannot tell howe to doe any hurt. How is it that being content with threatnings, they do not also rage against their bodies, saue onely because the power of God doeth binde them as a chaine? Not that the feare of God doth preuaile with them for it is the regarde of the people alone which hindreth them: but the Lord,

Lord doth binde them with his bonds though they be ignorant thereof. Luke commendeth vnto vs the prouidence of God in preserving his children: and though it be hidden from the wicked, yet we may behold the same with the eyes of faith. Furthermore the woonderfull Counsell of God doth shew it selfe heere, in that the glory of Christ is furthered by those which are his most deadly enimies. For whereas the Priestes doe assemble themselues together, it is not done without great rumour. All men waite for some rare and singular euent: the Apostles depart being let loose and acquitted. Therefore the aduersaries are not onely vanquished: but they confirme the Gospel against their will. Notwithstanding it is expedient for vs to marke again, that the faithful do so get the victorie, that they are alwaies humbled vnder the crosse. For they are threatned againe and straitly charged that they teach not hencefoorth in the name of Christ. Therefore they doe not so get the vpper hande, that they doe not triumph, saue onely vnder the reproch of the crosse. Whereas Luke saith that they did *all glorifie God*, he noteth the fruite of the miracle now the second time: although it may be that they were not all brought vnto the perfect ende. For that man which is touched with the feeling of the power of God, & doth not come vnto Christ, neither hath his faith confirmed by the myracle, he staieth as it were in the mid way. Yet this was some thing, though not all, that the power of God was acknowledged in the healing of the man, so that the aduersaries being ashamed, did cease off from their furie, or at least giue backe a little.

23 *Furthermore when they were let goe.* It shall appeare by and by to what end they declared to the other disciples, what things had befallen them: to wit, that they might be the more emboldned and encouraged by the grace of God heereafter: secondly that they might arme themselves with praier against the furious threatnings of their enimies. And thus must the children of God doe; one must pricke forward another, and they must ioine hand in hand that they may vanquish the common aduersary fighting vnder Christs banner. They consider with themselves what dangers hang ouer their heads, to the end they may be the more ready to enter the same: although they see their enemies prease fore vpon them: yet least it should greeue them to haue a newe combat euer now and then: they assure themselves that they shall be inuincible through the same power of God wherby they gat the victory before. And it is to be thought (although Luke make no mention thereof) that the Apostles being contented with their former aunswer, did not contende with those furies: & yet we must perswade our selues that they were not so forgetfull of their former constancie, that they did submit themselves vnto their vngodly decree like slaues.

24 *And when they had heard it, they lift vp their voice vnto God with one accord, and said, Lorde, thou art God which hast made heauen and earth, the sea and all things which are therein.*

25 *Which by the mouth of thy seruant Dauid hast said, Why haue the heathen raged together, and why haue the people imagined vaine things?*

- 26 The Kings of the earth haue stood vp, and the Rulers haue met together : against the Lord, and against his Christ.
- 27 For of a trueth Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, haue come together in this citie against thy holy sonne Iesus,
- 28 That they might doe whatsoeuer thine hande, and thy counsell had decreed before to be done.
- 29 And now O Lord, looke vpon the threatnings of these men, and graunt vnto thy seruants that they may speake thy word with boldnesse.
- 30 Reaching out thine hand to this ende, that healing, and signes, and wonders may be done by the name of thy holie sonne Iesus.
- 31 And when they had prayed, the place mooued wherein they were assembled. And they were all filled with the holie Ghost, and did speake the worde of God with boldnesse.

Wee are taught by this example, what is our ducie to doe, when our aduersaries doe imperiously threaten vs. For wee must not careleslie laugh in time of daunger, but the feare of daunger ought to driue vs to craue helpe at the hands of God: and this is a remedie to comfort and set vs vp on foote, least being terrified with threatnings, wee cease off from doing our ducie. Heere is a double fruit of this historie: that the disciples of Christ doe not feare when they heare that their enemies doe threaten them so sore, and prease so sore vpon them, as carelesse and sluggish men vse to doe, but being touched with feare, they flie to seeke helpe at the handes of God: And againe they are not terrified, neither yet do they conceiue any immoderate feare: but craue of God inuincible constancie with right godly petitions.

24 *Thou art God which hast created.* Although this title and commendation of Gods power be generall, yet it ought to be referred vnto the present matter. For they do in such sort acknowledge the power of God in the creation of the whole world, that they applie the same therewith all vnto the present vse. In like sort the Prophetes do oftentimes commend the same, to the end they may redresse that feare which troubleth vs when we behold the power of our enemies. Secondly they adde thereunto the promise: & they make these two the foundations of their boldnesse, wherewith they are emboldned to pray. And surely our prayers are such as they ought to be, and acceptable to God, onely then, when as staying our selues vpon his promises and power, wee pray with certaine hope to obtaine that for which we pray. For we cannot otherwise haue any true confidence, vnlesse God do will vs to come vnto him, and promise that he is readie to helpe vs: and secondly vnlesse we acknowledge that he is able ynough to helpe vs. Wherefore let the faithfull exercise themselves in this double meditation, so often as they adresse themselves vnto prayer. Furthermore we gather hereby after what sort we ought to consider the creation of the world: to wit, that we may knowe that all thinges are subiect to God, and ruled by his will: and when that the worlde hath done what it can, there shall no other thing come to passe but that which God hath decreed: yea that the wantonnesse of the wicked

wicked is monstrous, as if the clay should resist the potter. For this is the meaning of the faithful generally, that whatsoever dangers hang over their heads, yet can God prevent the same infinite ways, for as much as all things are in his hand: and that hee is able to make all the parts of heaven and earth (which he hath created) to obey him.

25 *Who by the mouth of David.* They descende nowe vnto the seconde member, that they aske nothing but that which God hath promised to performe. So that his will and power are ioyned together, to the ende they may fully assure themselves that they shall obtaine their requestes. And because the kingdome of Christ is now in hand, they make rehearsall of the promise of God, wherein he promiseth to defende and maintaine the same: so that when the whole worlde hath done what it can to ouerthrow it, yet all shall bee in vaine: And heerein appeareth their Godlinesse, and sincere zeale, in that they are not so much carefull for their owne safetie, as for the encreasing and aduancement of the kingdome of Christ.

Why haue the Gentiles raged? Wee must needs confesse that David speaketh of himselfe: who after he was chosen King by the Lord, and anointed by Samuel the Prophet, did enioy the kingdome verie hardly, because his enemies withstood him on euerie side. Wee knowe howe the rulers and people conspired together with Saul and his familie: after that, the Philistines and other straunge enemies, despising him when hee came newlie to the crowne, made warre against him, striuing who should beginne first. Wherefore it is not without cause that he complaineth that the Kings rage and take counsell together, and that the people doe goe about diuerse things. Neuertheless because he knew that God was the supporter of his kingdome, hee derideth their foolish enterprises, and affirmeth that they are vaine. But because his kingdome was established, that it might bee a figure or image of the kingdome of Christ; David doth not stay still in the shadowe it selfe, but hee apprehendeth the bodie: yea the holy Ghost, as the Apostles doe truly repeat the same, doeth sharply reprove the foolish and ridiculous madness of the worlde, in that they dare inuade the kingdome of Christ which God had established, as well in the person of David as of Christ himselfe. And this is a singular comfort, in that we heare that God is on our side, so long as wee goe on warfare vnder the kingdome of Christ. Heereby we may perswade our selues, that howsoever all men both high and low, doe wickedly conspire together against this kingdome, yet shall they not preuaile. For what is all the whole world compared with God? But wee must first of all knowe and assure our selues of this, that God will continually maintaine the kingdome of his sonne, whereof he himselfe is the author, so that we may set his decree (which shall not be broken) against the rashness of men: that trusting to the help of his hand, wee may not doubt to despise all the preparation and furniture of men though they be terrible. And he doth diligently expresse how great the bandes of the aduersaries are: hee saith that they attempt all things, he doeth also reckon vp their counsels, least any of these doe terrifie vs.

Furthermore when as the Psalm teacheth, that the kingdome of Christ shall endure, maugre the heades of the aduersaries, it doth also shewe that there shall be many aduersaries, which shall endeouour to ouerthrow the same. On the one side hee bringeth in the Kinges raging, on the other, the people all out of quiet. Whereby he significth that all estates shall be offended at it. And no maruell, because nothing is more contrarie to the flesh, than the Spirituall sworde of the Gospell, wherewith Rom. 15. 16. Christ killeth vs, that he may make vs obey him. Therefore wee must know this for a suertie, that the kingdome of Christ shall neuer be quiet in the world; least when we are to fight, we be afraid as at some strange thing.

26 *Against the Lorde and his Christ.* The Spirit teacheth by this worde that al those doe make warre against God, which refuse to submit themselves to Christ. They doe full little think this oftentimes. Notwithstanding it is so, that because God will raigne in the parson of his sonne alone, we refuse to obey him, so often as we rebell against Christ. As the Lord himselfe saith in Iohn, Hee which honoreth not the sonne, honoreth not the father. Wherefore let the hypocrites professe a thousande times, that they meane nothing lesse, than to make warre against God, yet shal they finde this true, that God is their open enemy, vnlesse they embrace Christ with his gospell. The vse of this doctrine is double: For it armeth vs against all the terrours of the flesh, because wee must not feare, lest they get the victorie of God, which withstand the Gospell. Againe we must beware, lest through the contempt of godlie doctrine, we aduance our selues against God to our owne destruction.

27 *Haue met together in this citie.* They declare that this prophecie was prooued to bee true by the euent, to the ende they may belieue the same more assuredly. For the sense is, Lorde thou hast spoken it, and we haue in trueth tryed the same to be true. And they call to mynde that which was done fowre yeeres before or thereabout. In like sort it is expedient for vs to applie the euents of things which are foretolde, to the confirmation of our faith. But because it might seeme that the inatter fell out farre otherwise then, than the Psalm pronounceth, for asmuch as they raged not in vaine, neither were the assaults of the enemies frustrate, when they had put Christ to death: and their violence went further afterward after a fearefull manner: the faithfull remooue this offence: and say that the enemies could doe no more, than God had appoynted. Therefore howsoeuer the wicked did suppose that Christ was quite taken away by death, and did now vainlie triumph, yet the faithfull confesse that their rage was all but vaine. But here may a question be moued, why he calleth them the Gentiles and people of Israel, seing there was but one bodie. I think that the diuersitie of countries is noted in this place, out of which the Iewes came together to the feast: as if they should haue said, that the Iewes which were borne in diuers places, hauing made as it were a concourse, did assault the kingdome of Christ, yet was their furie frustrate and of none effect.

Thy holie sonne Iesus. The Grecians vse the verie same worde which I translated

translated euen now, Seruant, when mention was made of Dauid: for they call *paída* sometimes a seruant, sometimes a Sonne. And Dauid is so called, because he was the minister of God, as well in ruling the people, as in the office of a Prophet. But this worde Sonne agreeth better with the person of Christ, vnlesse some man had leifer take it thus, that Luke meant to allude vnto that likelihood which Dauid had with Christ, when he setteth downe a worde of a double signification. It is expresly saide that God hath annointed his sonne, that that may truly agree to him which is in the Psalme: for in annointing him, God made him a King. And yet wee must note therewithall what manner annointing this was: for we know that he was not annointed with visible oile, but with the holie Ghost.

28 *That they might doe.* I haue already declared to what ende this is spoken: that the kingdome of Christ was so farre from being ouerrunne by that conspiracie, that in truth it did then flourish. Notwithstanding herein is contained a singular doctrine, that God doth so gouerne and guide all things by his secrete counsell, that he doth bring to passe those things which he hath determined, euen by the wicked. Not that they are ready willing to do him such service, but because he turneth their counsels & attempts backward: so that on the one side appeareth great equitie and most great righteousness: on the other appeareth nought but wickednesse and iniquitie. Which matter we haue handled more at large in the second Chapter. Let vs learne here by the way, that we must so consider the prouidence of God, that wee knowe that it is the chiefe and onely guider of all things, which are done in the worlde: that the diuell and all the wicked are kept backe with Gods bridle, least they should doe vs any harme: that when they rage fastest, yet are they not at libertie to doe what they list, but haue the bridle giuen them, yet so farre forth as is expedient to exercise vs. Those men which do acknowledge the foreknowledge of God alone, and yet confesse not that all things are done as it pleaseth him, are easily conuict by these words, That God hath appointed before that thing to be done which was done. Yea Luke being not contented with the worde *counsel*, addeth also *hand*, vnproperly, yet to the end he might the more plainly declare that the events of things are not onely gouerned by the counsell of God, but that they are also ordered by his power and hand.

29 *And now O Lord.* They doe very well extend that vnto themselves, which they cited concerning Christ: because hee will not bee separated from the Gospell: yea what trouble so euer befalleth his members, hee applieth that to his owne person. And they craue at Gods handes that hee will beate downe the crueltie of the aduersaries: yet not so much for their owne sake, that they may liue quietlie and without vexation, as that they may haue libertie to preach the Gospell in all places. Neither was it for them to desire a life which they might spende idly, hauing forsaken their calling. For they adde, Graunt vnto thy seruantes O Lorde, that they may speake boldly. And by the way wee must note this speech, that the Lorde would beholde their

Esai. 37. 14.
& 17.

threatnings. For seeing it belongeth properly to him, to resist the proud and to throw downe their loftie lookes: the more prouddie they bragge and boast, the more doe they vndoubtedly prouoke God to be displeased with them, and it is not to be doubted but that God being offended with such indignitie and crueltie, will redresse the same. So Ezechias to the end he may obtaine helpe in extremitie, declareth before the Lord the arrogancie of Senacherib and his cruell threatnings. Wherefore let the crueltie and reproches of our eninies rather stirre vp in vs a desire to pray, than any whit discourage vs from going forward in the course of our office.

Ephes. 6. 19.

30 *Grant vnto thy seruants.* Seeing that one myracle had stinged the enimie so sore, howe is it that these holy men do desire to haue new myracles done daily? Therefore we gather that hence, which I haue already touched, that they make so great account of the glorie of God, that in comparison of this, they set light by all other things. They haue respect vnto this one thing onely, that the power of God may be declared by myracles, which the godlie ought alwayes to desire, although the aduersaries burst, and all the whole Hell doe rage. The same must wee also thinke of boldnesse to speake. They knewe that the wicked coulde abide nothing worse, than the free course of the Gospel: but because they knowe that that is the doctrine of life, which God will haue published whatsoeuer befall: they doe vndoubtedly preferre the preaching thereof before all other things, because it is acceptable to God. And we are taught that wee doe then rightlie acknowledge the benefites of God as we ought, if by this occasion wee bee pricked forward to pray, that hee will confirme that which he hath begunne. The Apostles had shewed a token of heroicall fortitude: nowe againe they pray that they may bee furnished with boldnesse. So Paule desireth the faithfull, to pray vnto the Lorde that his mouth may bee opened, whereas notwithstanding his voyce did sounde euery where. Therefore the more we perceiue our selues to be holpen by the Lorde, let vs learne to craue at the hands of God that we may goe forward hereafter: and especially seeing the free confession of the Gospel is a singular gift of God, we must continually beseech him to keepe vs in the same.

31 *And when they had prayed.* Luke declareth now that God did not onely heare this prayer, but did also testifie the same by a visible signe from heauen. For the shaking of the place shoulde of it selfe haue done them small good: but it tendeth to another ende, that the faithfull may knowe that God is present with them. Finallic it is nothing else but a token of the presence of God. But the fruite followeth, for they are all filled with the holy ghost, and endowed with greater boldnesse. Wee ought rather to stande vpon this seconde member. For whereas God did declare his power then by shaking the place, it was a rare and extraordinarie thing: and whereas it appeared by the effect, that the Apostles did obtaine that which they desired, this is a perpetuall profite of prayer, which is also set before vs for an example.

- 32 *And the multitude which beleueed had one heart and one soule: and no man did say that any of those things which he possessed was his owne: but they had all things common.*
- 33 *And the Apostles did beare witnesse of the resurrection of Iesus Christ with great power, and great grace was vpon them all.*
- 34 *For there was none among them that lacked. For so manie as possessed lands or houses, selling them, they brought the price of those things which were solde.*
- 35 *And they laid it at the feete of the Apostles. And it was distributed to euery man according as he had neede.*
- 36 *And Ioses which was surnamed of the Apostles Barnabas (which is the sonne of comfort) a Leuite, of the countrie of Cyprus,*
- 37 *Whereas he had land, he solde it, and brought the money, and laide it at the Apostles feete.*

32 *And the multitude.* In this place there are three things commended: that the faithfull were all of one minde: that there was a mutuall partaking of goods amongst them: that the Apostles behaued themselves stoutly in auouching the resurrection of Christ. He saith that the multitude *had one heart*: because this is farre more excellent than if a few men should haue a mutuall consent. And heretofore hee hath declared that the Church did grow to be about fise thousand. And now he saith that there was wonderfull concord in so great a multitude, which is a very hard matter.

And surely where faith beareth the chiefe sway, it doth so knitte the hearts of men together, that all of them do both will and nill one thing. For discord springeth hence, because wee are not all gouerned with the same Spirit of Christ. It is well knowne that by these two words *heart & soule*, he meaneth the will. And because the wicked do oftentimes conspire together to do euill: this concord was laudable and holy therefore, because it was amongst the faithfull.

And no man did say. This is the second member: that they coupled this loue with externall benefits. But we shall see anon, after what sort they had their goods common. This is now worth the noting in the text of Luke, that the inwarde vnitie of mindes goeth before as the roote, and then the fruite followeth after. And surely euen we ought to obserue the same order, wee must one loue another, and then this loue of ours must shewe it selfe by externall effects. And in vaine do we boast of a right affection, vnlesse there appeare some testimonie thereof in externall offices. Moreouer Luke declareth there with all, that they were not of one minde for any respect of their owne commoditie, for as much as the rich men, when they did liberally bestowe their goods, sought nothing lesse then their owne gaine.

33 *And with great power.* This thirde member appertaineth to doctrine. For Luke doth signifie that the zeale which the Apostles had to preach the Gospel, was so farre from being diminished, that they were rather endewed with newe power. Whereas he doeth onely name the

resurrection of Christ, it is Synecdoche: for this part is put for the whole Gospel. But Luke maketh mention of the resurrection alone, because it is as it were the furnishing or fulfilling of the Gospel: and secondlie because they had endured a sore cumbat for the same, and the Sadduces were sore grieved at it, who did then beare the chiefe swindge.

And greate grace was. He signifieth that this serued not a little to the spreading abroade of doctrine, in that by healing the poore so bountifully, they found fauour at the handes of straungers. For he saith that they were beloued, because they were beneficiall. Therefore there is a shewing of a reason in these wordes, *No man amongst them did lack.* Although wee neede not doubt of this, but that their honestie, and temperance, and modestie, and patience, and other vertues did prouoke manie to beare them good will. Hee declareth afterwarde, after what sorte they had their goods common, which hee had touched before: to wit, that the rich men sould their landes and houses, that they might relieue the pouertie of the poore.

34 *For so manie as were.* Although this bee an vniuersall speech, yet is it all one as if it were indefinite. And assuredly it is to be thought, that there were manie which did not diminish their possessions, and that may be gathered out of the text. For when he speaketh of Ioses anone, vndoubtedly hee meant to note a notable example passing all others. Therefore hee saith, that all did that which manie did euerie where. Neither doth this disagree with the common vse of the Scripture. Againe he meaneth not that the faithfull solde all that they had, but onely so much as neede required. For this is spoken for amplifications sake, that the rich men did not only relieue the pouertie of their brethren of the yerelie reuenue of their landes, but they were so liberall, that they spared not their lands. And this might bee, though they did not robbe themselves of all, but onely a little diminish their reuenues. Which wee may gather againe out of the words of Luke: For hee saith that this was the end, that no man might lack. He sheweth further that they vsed great wisdom: because it was distributed as euery man had need. Therefore the goods were not equally deuided, but ther was a discrete distribution made, lest anie should be out of measure oppressed with pouertie. And peraduenture Ioses hath this commendation giuen him by name, because he sold his onely possession. For by this meanes hee passed all the rest. Hereby it appeareth what that meaneth, that no man counted any thing his owne, but they had all things common. For no man had his owne priuatly to himselfe, that he alone might enioy the same, neglecting others: but as neede required, they were readie to bestow vpon al men. And now we must needs haue more then yron bowels: seeing that wee are no more moued with the reading of this historie. The faithfull did at that day giue abundantly euen of that which was their owne: but wee are not onely content at this day wickedly to suppress that which we haue in our handes, but doe also robbe others. They did simplie and faithfully bring forth their owne: we inuent a thousand subtile shifts to draw all things vnto vs by hooke or by crooke. They laid it downe at the

Apostles

Apostles secte: we feare not with sacrilegious boldnesse to conuert that to our owne vse, which was offered to God. They sold in times past their possessions: there reigneth at this day an vnfatiable desire to buy. Loue made that common to the poore and needie, which was proper to euery man: such is the vnnaturalnes of some men now, that they cannot abide that the poore should dwell vpon the earth, that they shoulde haue the vse of water, aire, and heauen. Wherefore these things are written for our shame & reproch. Although euen the poore themselues are too blame for some part of this euill. For seeing goods cannot be common after this sort, saue onely where there is a godly agreement, and where there reigneth one heart and one soule: manie men are either so proud; or vnthankfull, or slouthfull, or greedie, or such hypocrites, that they do not onely so much as in them lyeth, quite put out the desire to doe well: but also hinder habilitie. And yet must we remember that admonition of Paul, that we be not wearie of well doing. And whereas vnder colour of this, the Anabaptists and fantastical men haue made much adoe, as if there ought to be no ciuil property of goods amongst Christians, I haue already refuted this folly of theirs in the second Chapter. For neither doeth Luke in this place prescribe a lawe to all men, which they must of necessitie follow, whiles that he reckoneth vp what they did, in whom a certaine singular efficacie and power of the holy Spirit of God did shew it selfe: neither doth hee speake generally of all men, that it can bee gathered that they were not counted Christians which did not sell all that they had.

Galath. 6. 9.

CHAP. V.

- 1 **A**Nd a certaine man, called *Ananias*, with *Sapphira* his wife solde a possession.
- 2 And he kept backe part of the price, his wife knowing thereof: and bringing part, he laid it at the Apostles feete.
- 3 And Peter saide, *Ananias*, why hath *Sathan* filled thine heart, that thou shouldst lie to the holy Ghost, and keepe backe part of the price of the ground?
- 4 Did it not remaining remaine to thee? and being sold, was it not in thy power? how is that thou hast put this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lyed to men, but to God.
- 5 And when *Ananias* heard these wordes, falling, he yelded vp the ghost, and there came great feare vpon all those which had heard these things.
- 6 Furthermore the yonge men which were present, gathered him vp, and carrying him out, they buried him.

1 Those things which Luke hath reported hitherto, did shewe that that companie which was gathered together vnder the name of Christ was rather a companie of Angels than of men. Moreouer that was incredible vertue, that the rich men did dispoile themselues of their owne accord, not onely of their money, but also of their land, that they might relieue the poore. But now he sheweth that Satan had inuēted a shift to get into that holy companie: & that vnder color of such excellent vertue.

For he hath wonderfull wiles of hypocrisie to insinuate himselfe. This way doth Sathan assault the Church, when as he cannot preuaile by open war. But wee must specially in this place haue respect vnto the drift of the holy Ghost. For in this historie he meant to declare, first how acceptable singlenesse of heart is to God, and what an abomination hypocrisie is in his sight: secondly howe greatlie hee alloweth the holy and pure policie and gouernment of his Church. For this is the principall point, the punishment wherewith God punished Ananias and his wife. As the greatnesse thereof did at that time terrifie them all, so it is vnto vs a testimonie, that God cannot abide this vnfaithfulnesse, when as bearing a shew of holines where there is none, we do mocke him contemptibly. For if hauing weighed all the circumstances, we be desirous to know the summe: Luke condemneth no other fault in Ananias, than this, that he meant to deceiue God and the Church with a faigned offering. Yet there were more euils packed vnder this dissimulation: the contempt of God, whom he feareth not, though hee knewe his wickednesse: sacrilegious defrauding, because hee keepeth backe parte of that which hee professed to bee holy to God: peruerse vanitie and ambition, because hee vaunteth himselfe in the presence of men without hauing any respect vnto Gods iudgement: want of faith, because he would neuer haue gone this way to worke, vnlesse he had mistrusted God: the corrupting of a godlie and holy order: furthermore the hypocrisie it self was a great offence of it selfe. The fact of Ananias did beare a goodlie shew, although he had giuen onely the halfe of his lande. Neither is this a small vertue, for a rich man to bestow the halfe of his goods vpon the poore: but the sacrifices of the vngodly are an abomination to God: neither can any thing please him, where the singlenesse of heart is wanting. For this cause is it that Christ maketh more account of the two mites offered by the widdowe, than of the great summes of others, who of their great heapes giue some part. This is the cause why God doth shewe an example of such sharpe punishment in Ananias. Nowe let vs note euerie point by it selfe. *He laide* it at the feete of the Apostles. Loe what ambition doth. Ananias is ashamed, not to be accounted one of the best. therefore although hee be greedie of monie, yet to the ende he may purchase a name amongst men, hee depriueth himselfe of some part of his riches. In the meane while hee doeth not consider that hee lyeth and disceiueth in the sight of God, and that God will punish this lye. So it is, that he honoreth the Apostles feete, more than Gods eyes. Wherefore wee must take good heede, that when wee doe well, wee doe not seeke to bee praised of the by standers: and it is not without cause that Christ saith, that it is profitable for vs, when wee giue our almes, to haue the left hande ignorant of that which the right hand doth.

3 *And Peter saide.* Howe did Peter knowe Ananias his fraude and purloining? vndoubtedly by the reuelation of the Spirite. Therefore Luke signifieth vnto vs, that the Apostles did after a sort represent gods person, and supplie his roome. If the Spirite of God by the mouth of a mortall

mortall man, do so fore vge an hypocrite, being otherwise painted with the beautifull colour of vertues, how shall the reprobate abide the voice of god himself, with the sound of the trüper, when they shal appear before his iudgement seat? Furthermore Peter pointeth out the cruelnes and horribleness of the offence, by his question, when he saith, that Satan had filled the hart of Ananias. For there is no man whose hart is not pricked with the prickles of Satan: and all men are also many wayes tempted, yea these temptations pearce into their minds: but where Satan possesseth the hart, he reigneth in the whole man, hauing as it were expelled God. This is a signe of a reprobate, to be so addicted and giuen ouer to Satan, that the Spirit of God hath no place. That which followeth afterward concerning lying, may haue a double sense: either that he did falsely beare a shew of the Spirit, or that he lyed against the Spirit. And in deede it is word for word *Mentiri Spiritum*: but forasmuch as the Greeke word *Pseudesthai* is ioyned with a double accusatiue case, & that doth better agree with the text, I am rather of this minde, that Ananias is reprehended, because he did lie falsely to the holy Ghost. Which he confirmeth shortly after, when he vpbraideth this vnto him, that he hath lyed vnto God and not vnto men. Wherefore we must take great heed, that hypocrisie reigne not in vs: which hath this wickednes proper to it, to goe about to disceiue God, and as it were, *cornicum oculos configere*, to goe about to make blinde those which are most wise: which cannot be without a disloyall and vnseemely mocke. Wherefore it is not without cause that Peter saith, that where this commeth to passe, the heart is possessed of Satan. For who durst (vnles he were void of reason) so blasphemous God? Therefore Peter asketh him as of some wöder: because such blindnesse is horrible.

4 *Did it not remaining.* This amplifieth the offence, because he sinned being enforced by no necessitie. For seeing it is no iust or lawful excuse to haue been prouoked by some other meanes, how much worse is it to run headlong vnto wickednesse willingly, and as it were of set purpose to pull downe Gods vengeance? We gather out of this, that no man was enforced to sell his goods or landes. For Peter saith that Ananias had free libertie to keep both his land and his money: because in the second member the field which was sold, is takē for the price it self. Therefore he should neuer theles haue been counted faithfull, though he had kept that which was his owne. Whereby it appeareth that they are mē destitute of their right wits, who say that it is not lawful for the faithfull to haue any thing of their owne.

Thou hast not lied to men but to God. Although the wordes be diuersly construed, yet doe I not doubt but that this confirmeth the former sentence. For hypocrites do so inwrappe themselues in so many shifts, that they thinke they haue nothing to doe with God. And Peter speaketh thus expresse, because Ananias had deceiued the church. But he ought to haue considered, that, Where two or three bee gathered together in the name of Christ, he is present there as the chief gouernour: yea hee ought to haue behaued himselfe no other wise in that assemblie, than if he

he should haue seene God with his eyes. For seeing that God wil reigne in the Church, if we giue him any reuerence, wee must reuerence that rule and gouernement religiously, which hee exerciseth by his woorde. The Apostles were in deed men, but not priuate men: because God had put them in his steede. Furthermore we must note, that he saith that he lieth to God, who doeth lie to the holy Ghost. For the diuinitie of the holy ghost is manifestly proued by this forme of speech. In like sort Paul saith. Yee are the Temples of God, because his Spirit dwelleth in you. 1. Cor. the third Chapt.

5 *When Ananias heard these thinges.* The death of Ananias doeth in deede declare and proue the force of the word, which Paul doth highly extoll: to wit, that it is the sauour of death vnto death to those which perish. 2. Cor. 2. He speaketh in deede of the spirituall death of the soule, but there was a visible signe in the bodie of Ananias, of that punishment which cannot bee seene with the eyes of men. Hee was not slaine with sword, by force, nor hand, but was stricken deade with the onely hearing of the voice. When we heare this, let the threatnings of the Gospel terrifie vs, and humble vs in time, least we also feele the like effect. For that which is spoken of Christ, He shall slea the wicked with the breath of his mouth: doth not only appertaine to the heade of the wicked, but also to euery member. For those which refuse the saluation offered in his word, it must needs be deadly to them, which was naturally wholesome. But and if any man doe thinke it an absurd thing, that the Apostle did punish Ananias bodily: First I answere that this was an extraordinarie thing: secondly that this was one of the gifts of the Spirit: as it appeareth by the 12. Chapter of the first to the Corinthians. After which sort we shall afterward see Elimas the forcerer stricken with blindness by Paul. Therefore Peter did nothing which was impertinent to his function, when hee did in time shoote that dart which the holy Ghost had giuen him. And whereas some thinke that this was too cruell a punishment, this commeth to passe, because weighing Ananias his sinne in their owne and not in Gods ballance, they count that but a light offence which was a most great and grievous crime, being full of such hainous offences, as I haue already declared. Othersome doe thinke that this was nothing so, because they see many hypocrites escape scotfree daily, which do no lesse mocke God than did Ananias: yea, because they themselves being most grosse contemners of God, are yet notwithstanding unpunished for their wickednesse. But as God hath powred out visible graces vpon his Church in the beginning, to the ende we may know that hee will be present with vs by the secrete power of his spirit: yea hee shewed that openly by externall signes, which wee feele inwardly by the experiment of faith: so hee declared by the visible punishment of two, howe horrible a iudgement remaineth for all hypocrites, which shall mocke God and his Church.

And there came great feare. This was the Lords purpose, by punishing one, to make the rest afraid: that they might reuerently beware of all hypocrisie. And that which Luke saith, that *they feared*, doeth appertaine

aine vnto vs also. For God meant to giue all ages a lesſon at that time: that they may learne to deale ſincerely and vprightly with him. In the meane ſeaſon, the puniſhment of this wicked perſon ought to haue encouraged the godlie heereafter to conſecrate their goods more freely to God and the poore: becauſe they might gather howe precious almes was in the ſight of God, ſeeing the proſanin thereof was ſo puniſhed.

- 7 And there was paſſed about the ſpace of thre houres, when his wife came in ignorant of that which was done.
- 8 And Peter ſaid vnto her, Tell me, ſolde yee the ſilde for ſo much? ſhee answered, Surely for ſo much.
- 9 And Peter ſaid vnto her, What is this that yee are agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the ſeete of thoſe which haue buried thy husband are at the doore which ſhall carry thee out.
- 10 And immediatly ſhe fell downe at his feet, and gaue vp the ghoſt. Furthermore when the yonge men came in, they found her deade, and when they had carried her out, they buried her beſide her husband.
- 11 And there came great feare vpon all the Church, and vpon all which heard theſe things.

7 That puniſhment wherewith the Lord puniſhed Sapphira, contei-
neth no newe thing: ſaue onely that the example was the more con-
firmed thereby. And it came to paſſe by the certaine prouidence of God
that the Church ſhoulde ſee apart the obſtinate wickednes and treche-
rous mind of them both. Seeing their faults were alike they might haue
ben known together: but this was more fit and profitable for the church,
that they might ſeuerally bewray their owne wickednes. Neither was
Sapphira prouoked by the ſight of her husband to diſemble (as it falleth
out oftentimes) that the fault could be aſcribed to ſhamefaſtnes: but of
her owne accord, and being pricked forward by no other meanes, ſhee
ſeemeth to be no better than her husband. Moreover their wickedneſſe
in lying was like, for as much as ſhee may ſee by Peter his interrogation
that that their guile was found out.

8 Tell me. We ſee that God doeth not by and by puniſh her, but firſt
he trieth the matter thoroughly: leaſt he ſhould ſend vengeance vpon a-
ny ſaue the obſtinate, & thoſe which will not be pardoned. For although
Sapphira did know that the matter was hidden, ſhe ought to haue bene
ſtricken with this queſtion of Peter, no otherwiſe than if ſhe had ben ci-
ted to appeare before the iudgement ſeat of God. She hath a time gran-
ted her to repent: yea this is as it were a pleaſant inuiting vnto repen-
tance. But ſhee in holding on ſo careleſſly, doeth declare that ſhee was
vncurable: becauſe ſhee is touched with no feare of God. And heere-
by are wee taught to labour diligently to bring ſinners into the way. For
the ſpirit of God keepeth this moderation: but when as ſtubberneſſe
and the ſtubberne contempt of God is added vnto the offence, it is now
high time to puniſh. Therefore thoſe men are too arrogant who are
diſpleaſed with the immoderate rigour of God. It is rather our ductie

to consider how we shall in time to come stande before the iudgement seat of God. Although this is too much to despise his holie power & maiestie, if we will haue him mocked freely without any punishment. Moreover, so many circumstances which before I haue gathered, do sufficiently proue that Ananias and Sapphira were not worthie of one death only. For first of all hypocrisie is of it self very abhominable to God: secondly whereas they are determined to lie vnto God, this ariseth of great contempt in that they do not reuerence & fear Christ being the chief gouernor of those amongst whom they were, it is vngodlines ioyned with impudencie: because, so they can escape shame and reproch amongst men, before whom they were determined to vaunt & brag, they passe not to denie their manifest wickednesse vnto God. Whereas they do stubbornly denie their offence, this doth as it were, make vp the heape and measure. And whereas innumerable hypocrites do no lesse mocke God and the church daylie, who notwithstanding are not punished with death, I haue already shewed why this ought to seeme to bee no inconuenient thing. For as much as God is the only iudge of the world, it belongeth to him to punish euery man at his pleasure, when & how it seemeth good to him. Wherefore wee may not prescribe vnto him a certaine meane & maner of punishment. But the greatnes of the spiritual iudgement which is as yet hid, hath been set before vs, in the bodily punishment of two, as in a mirrour. For if we consider what it is to be cast into eternall fire, we shall not iudge that this is the greatest euill and punishment of all, to fall downe dead before men. Looke the tenth chapter of the first to the Co-

I. Cor. 10. 5.

9 *To tempt the spirit.* He vttereth the same thing in other words which he had said before: to wit, that they did mock god vnreuerently and contemptible. But he saide that they *tempted* the Spirit, because they had cunningly packt their fraud, as if the Spirite of God were not the know-er of the harts. For it was a point of too great carelesnes, seeing the one made the other priuy to their wickednes, to make their match between themselves, hauing as it were excluded God. For the scripture saith that God is tempted, either when his power is taken from him, or the knowledge of all thinges is denied him. Furthermore, he meaneth that Spirit which gouerned the Church by the Apostles. For when Christe sayeth, When the Spirite commeth, he shal iudge the world, he noteth no other kind of authority than that which he exerciseth by the ministerie of the church.

11 *And there came feare.* Hee saith againe, that the punishment of one, was a lesson for all. But he plainly expresseth in this place a double feare. He saith that the church feared, because the faithfull doe neuer so perfectly fear God, but that they profite yet more, being admonished by his iudgements. Therefore by all those punishments which we read haue been laid vpon men in times past, and do daily see to be laid vpon them, doth God call vs back from the enticements and libertie of sinning. For our flesh must be bridleed euer now and then after this sort: because one bridle will scarce serue the turne. There was another maner feare in the
strangers

strangers, yet no such feare as brought them vnto the sincere worship of God, yet notwithstanding it was such as caused them to giue the glorie to God.

- 12 *And by the handes of the Apostles were done manie signes and woonders amongst the people. And they were all with one accord in the porch of Solomon.*
 13 *And of the other darst no man ioyne himselfe to them: but the people magnified them.*
 14 *And the multitude of those that belecued in the Lorde both of men and women, grew more and more.*
 15 *So that they brought forth the sicke into the streetes, and laid them in beds and couches, that at the least way the shadowe of Peter as he came, might shadow some of them.*
 16 *And a multitude of the next cities came together to Ierusalem, bringing their sicke and those which were vexed with vncleane spirites, which were all healed.*

12 He returneth to myracles of another sort, which are more proper to the gospel: to wit, whereby Christe doth not only declare his power, but also his goodnesse: to the end he may allure men vnto himselfe with the sweetnesse of his grace. For he came to saue the world, and not to condemne it. Therefore whereas the sicke are healed, and other are deliuered from diuels, these benefites done to the bodie, doe represent the spirituall grace of Christ: and therefore they agree with his natural office, that I may so speake. That feareful signe which was shewed in Ananias and Saphira, came to passe extraordinarylie. Luke saith that the church was encreased by myracles, because they serue for faith (as wee haue said) to prepare some, to confirme other some. Whereby that is proued againe, which I haue said els where, that myracles must neuer be separated from the word. Luke sheweth the multitude of myracles by this, in that the sicke were brought forth euerie where, that they might bee healed. For God meant thus to set forth the Gospel of his sonne, especially at the beginning: that he might for a certaintie testifie to the Iewes, that that restoring of all things was present, which was so often promised, and in which all their hope was reposed, as they themselves did pretende, and make semblance. It is wel knowne that Couches were certaine little beddes in which the men of olde were woont to rest at noone. Because they might the more easily carrie them out, they laide the sicke in them.

And they were all with one accorde. He signifieth vnto vs that they were woont to meete together at certaine houres, not onely for doctrine and prayers sake, but that they might winne other vnto the Lord, as occasion was giuen. For euerie man liued at home at his owne house, but they had their meetings there, as assuredly no bodie of the Church can otherwise continue. For if euerie man wil be his owne teacher, and pray apart by himself, and if there be no meetings & assemblies, how excellentlie so euer the Church be ordered and appointed, yet must it needs decay

decay and come to nought. He saith that they were all of one mind, to the end we may know that they did all keepe that order willingly, that no man was so disordered, as to keepe himselfe at home, neglecting the publike assembly. Wherein they shewed a token not only of modestie, but also of constancie For they could not doe this without daunger, seeing the place was so famous. For which cause the agreement of them all to put them selues in hazard, was so much the more worthie of commendation.

13 *And of other diuine no man.* This was the second fruit of the myracles, in that those which beleueed not, being conuict with the excellent power of God, dare not despise the Apostles, but are rather enforced to reuerence the church. Yet that might seeme an absurd thing, that being terrified with myracles, they flie from God and his people. I answer, that they were letted through their owne fault from comming. And it is not to be doubted, but that God doth call vs vnto himselfe by myracles. Therefore whosoeuer they bee that goe not so farre, as willingly to imbrace the grace of God which shineth in them, they are letted and hindered by their owne peruerse and euill conscience. Yet this is some frute, in that God wringeth some feare out of them: although Luke doth ascribe this not only to the myracle, but rather comprehendeth all togeather which might serue to the encreasing of the dignitie of the Church. For al things were so ordered, that there shined there a certain diuine maiestie: for they did no lesse differ frō the other, than Angels from men. For there is a certaine secrete maiestie in holic discipline, and in sincere godlinesse, which doeth euen fast binde the wicked whither they will or noe. But we knowe not at this day of what sort the same is, yea rather we cause our selues to be despised together with the Gospel, through our profane libertie of euil liuing. Furthermore the punishment of Ananias and his wife, did not a little terrifie the wicked, and keepe them from breaking in vnadvisedly into the companie of those men, where God had shewed himself so sharp a iudge. Yet we must note, that he speaketh of men which were indifferent, in this place, & of those which were not of the worst sort. For there were at that time many at Ierusalem, whom neither the reuerence of signes, neither yet of the angelical holines of the godly could moue. Therefore Luke meaneth moderate men, in whom there was some seed of the feare of God: like as we see at this day certain, who the vanitie of the world keepeth back frō submitting their necks vnto the yoke of Christ: yet because they smel out some diuine thing in our doctrine, they dare not despise the same: yet wee may see also in what deadlie grins Satan insinatheth all those which haue not the spirit of Christ, that they do not only feare to prouide for themselves, but purposely auoide those remedies which are offered them vnto saluation. They both see & allow those things which are both holy and profitable, and yet notwithstanding they are either carried headlong vnto things which are worse, or els they wax drowie in their filthines.

15 *The shadow of Peter as he came.* The Papists abuse this text, not only to the end they may comend feigned myracles which they say are done

at the graues of martyrs: but also that they may boast of their reliques. Why (say they) shall not the graue or garment, or the touching of the bones of Peter haue power to heale, as well as his shadowe had this power? I answer, we must not by and by thinke that that is right, whiche Luke saith was done by ignorant men, and those which knewe not the pure faith. Yet we haue a more certaine answer in readinesse than this. For the apostles wer endued with such power for this cause, bicause they were ministers of the gospel. Therefore they vsed this gift in as much as it serued to further the credite of the gospel: yea God did no lesse shewe forth his power in their shadowe than in their mouth. Those myracles wherof the Papists babble, are so vnlike to these, that they are rather altogether contrarie. For this is the end of their myracles, to lead away the world from Christ vnto Saints.

- 17 And the highest priest rose and all that were with him, that is to say, the sect of the Sadduces, and were filled with zeale. Or, Indignation.
- 18 And they laid handes vpon the Apostles, & put them in the common prison.
- 19 But the Angell of the Lord opened the dore of the prison in the night season, and bringing them out, said:
- 20 Goe, and standing speake in the temple vnto the people, all the wordes of this life.
- 21 When they heard this early in the morning, they entred into the temple, and taught. But when the highest priest came, and those that were with him, they called a councell, and all the whole Senate of the children of Israel and sent into the common prison, to fetch them.
- 22 But when the Ministers came, they found them not. Therefore they returned and tolde, saying:
- 23 The prison truly found we shut with all diligence, and the keepers standing at the dore, but when the prison was opened, we found none within.
- 24 When the chiefe priest and the captaine of the temple and the priests heard these sayings, they doubted of these things, what this would be.
- 25 Furthermore a certaine man coming tolde them, saying: Beholde, the men whom ye had put in prison, stand in the temple teaching the people.
- 26 Then the captain going with the ministers, brought them without violence. For they feared the people, least they should be stoned.

17 Luke hath hitherto declared that the church was wonderfully increased, that it was furnished with diuers gifts, that it excelled in myracles: finally that the kingdome of Christ did flourish there by al means: now he beginneth to shew that the furie of the wicked was kindled with these things, so that they raged forer afresh. Whence we may gather with what blind furie & rage Satan driueth the forwardes, when as they are so little terrified with such euident power of God, that they runne headlong more boldlye, and with greater force, and bende all their force as it were to ouerthrowe the very heauen. As this so great blindness is a horrible punishment of almightie GOD so ought it to teach al men to submit themselves betimes to god, least that they themselves
being

being taken with the Spirite of giddinesse (whiles they runne against the hande of God) bee broken in peeces with the same. Neuerthelesse let vs knowe that God will so encrease his Church with spirituall good thinges, that yet notwithstanding he suffereth the same to be vexed of the wicked. Therefore we must alway be ready for the cumbate. For our estate at this day is not vnlike to theirs. Especially the knowledge of the gifts of God, whereby he testifieth that hee is present with vs, ought to encourage vs, least the furie and boldnesse of the wicked do terrifie and dismay vs. For this is no smal comfort, when we knowe that God is present with vs.

Which were with him. Hee meaneth those which were most familiar, and the highest linked in friendship with the chiefe Priest, whose counsell hee was wont to vse: and whom he had, being as it were gathered and culled out of the whole order, not for iudgement, or discretion, but for the loue of his faction: as they did then contend among themselves shamelesly, like mortall enemies. Furthermore Luke saith againe, that the Sadduces did beare the greatest swinge at that day: to the ende wee may knowe that the gouernment was then confused with horrible wastnesse: when as such a sect could beare rule. But God suffered the Synagogue to be drowned in such extreame reproch, after that hee had separated his Church from it, to the ende they might haue the lesse excuse, who dispising the gospel, did continue in such a sinke of filthinesse. In the meane season what did enforce and driue forward those swine, who were touched with no care of the life to come, saue onely meere ambition, and desire to keepe that lordship and preheminence, which they had gotten?

They were filled with zeale. I had leiffer keepe the grecke woorde still (especially seing it is common ynough otherwise) then to translate it Emulation or indignation. For hee speaketh generally of the peruerse and violent force, wherewith hypocrites are carried and inflamed to maintaine their superstitions. Wherby it appeareth, what account God maketh of zeale, and what praise it deserueth, when as it is not gouerned by reason and wisdom: that is, when it is not lead and guided by the Spirite of God. Wee see at this day those men mooued and stirred with diuellish furie, who will be counted the most deuout of al men: who rage horrible to shedde innocent blood. Neuerthelesse let vs note, that he speaketh not in this place of an vnaduised or blinde zeale, which was in many of the Iewes, as Paule affirmeth, but wee vnderstande rather a whot and vnbridled violence. For although the wicked bee accused of their owne consciences, because they wittingly resist godlinesse: yet doe they disceiue themselves with a false shewe of zeale, because it is lawfull to preuent new thinges. So at this day almost in all poperie, they boast onely of zeale, whereas notwithstanding they are zealous for their belie. But admit we grant that that is true which they pretende, how can this excuse the heate of their crueltie, whereunto they are enforced by their blindness? as if this were a chiefe vertue, to grant libertie to their wrath, to bee auenged of that which displeaseth them. But this was for-
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mer in order : to make a difference betweene good and euill, least any thing be dissolued vnaduisedly.

19 *The angell of the Lorde.* The Lord brought the Apostles out of prison, not because he would rid them quite out of the handes of their enemies: for he suffered them afterwards to be brought back again, & to be beaten with roddes. But hee meant to declare by this myracle that they were in his hand and tuition, to the end hee might maintaia the credite of the gospel: partly, that the church might haue another confirmation thereby: partly that the wicked might be left without excuse. Wherefore we must not hope alwaies, nay we must not alwaies desire that God will deliuer vs from death: but we must bee content with this one thing, that our life is defended by his hand so far as is expedient. In that hee vseth the ministerie of an angell, in this hee doth according to his common custome. For he testifieth euery where in the scriptures, that the angels are ministers of his goodnes towards vs. Neither is that a vaine speculation. For this is a profitable help for our infirmitie, that wee knowe that not only god doth care for vs, but also that the heavenly spirits do watch for our fastie. Againe, this was no small pledge of Gods loue towards vs, that the creatures of al other most noble are appointed to haue regarde of our fastie. The angel openeth the prison in the night: because he wold not worke the myracle, when the wicked might see him : although hee would haue the same being wrought, knowen by the euent it selfe.

20 *Speak in the Temple.* This is the end of their deliuerance, that they imploy themselues stoutly in preaching the Gospell, and prouoke their enemies courageously, vntill they die valiantly. For they were put to death at length when the hand of God ceased, after that they had finished their course. But now the Lord openeth the prison for them, that they may be at libertie to fulfill their function. That is worth the marking, because we see many men, who after they haue escaped out of persecution, doe afterward keepe silence, as if they had done their dutie towards God, and were no more to be troubled: other some also doe scape away by denying Christ. But the Lorde doth deliuer his children, not to the end they may cease off from the course which they haue begun, but rather that they may be the more zealous afterward, the apostles might haue objected, It is better to keepe silence for a time, for as much as wee cannot speak one word without daunger. We are now apprehended for one only sermon, how much more shall the furie of our enemies bee inflamed heereafter, if they shall see vs make no end of speaking? But because they knew that they were to liue and to die to the Lord, they doe not refuse to doe that which the Lord commanded. So we must alwaies mark what fuction the Lord inioyneth vs. There will many things meete vs oftentimes, which may discourage vs, vnlesse being content with the commandement of God alone, wee doe our duetic, committing the successe to him.

The words of this life. A singular commendation of the Gospell, that it is a liuely doctrine, bringing saluation vnto men. For the righteousnesse of God is reuealed vnto vs in it, and in it Christ offereth himselfe

vnto vs with the sacrifice of his death, with the Spirite of regeneration, with the earnest of our adoption. And this is spoken expressely to the Apostles, to the ende they may the more couragiously enter all manner cumbates for the Gospell, forasmuch as they heare that they are ministers of eternal saluation. The demonstratiue is added for the more certaintie; as if the angel did point out life with his finger: as assuredly we need not to seek the same far, when we haue the worde in our mouth, & in our hart, vnles peraduenture some man had rather take it by hypallage, the *wordes* of this life, for *these* wordes: which I do not reiect; yet that former sence me thinks is better. For it was a new reuelation of Christe, wherein they had life present.

21 *And when the chief priest came.* The chiefe Priest calleth all the counsell together now, least if giuing the honour to his owne sect, he omit others, & be not able to beare the burthen. Therefore he is enforced by feare to cal the multitude together, notwithstanding they obserue diligently and straitly the forme of law. The elders are called, who did gouerne, that nothing may be done, but according to the sentence and authoritie of the counsell. Who would not haue hoped for a moderate end, seeing they began thus. And surely they pretende what colour they can, least they seeme to oppresse the truth violently and tyrannously. But when they heare that the Apostles teache in the temple, howsoever they know that they came not out by deceit of man, but myraculously, yet they hold on still in their purpose, where appeareth together with the vngodlines of behauiour, & contempt of God, horrible furie & want of reason. Therefore the beautifull colours of right and equitie do neuer so couer hypocrites, but that they do at length bewray their wickednes. They must needs certainly gather by all circumstaunces that it is the work of God, that the prison was opened, yet they do not dout openly to rage against god. These things are also meet for our time. We know how proudly the Papissts boast of that *maxime* of theirs: That lawfull counells must be obeied, because they represent the church. Moreouer they call those lawfull counells, and they will haue them so accounted, wherein nothing is wanting touching the externall fourme. And such a counsell was this whereof Luke speaketh in this place: and yet notwithstanding we know that it was gathered, to put out the name of Christe. For although the priestes did then creep in vnto honor, by subtiltie or by inordinate sute to winne the fauour of men, or by other wicked policies, or whether they burst in vnto the same by bribery, or murther, yet the dignitie of the priesthood did continue as yet, vntill Christe was reuealed. There was in the assembly of the elders a representing of the Church: but whereas the truth of God is not sought, all outwarde appearance is nothing els but a meere visure. Therefore it is in vaine for the Papissts to couer their abominations with the shadowe of this buckler. Because it is not sufficient for those to bee gathered together who are rulers of the Church, vnlesse they doe this in the name of Christ. Otherwise for as muche as it is an vsuall policie of Satan, to transfourme himselfe into an angell of light, we will graunt him as fit a couert vnder the
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title of the Church, as he can wish.

He brought them without violence. We haue spoken somewhat before of the captaine of the Temple. For I doe not thinke that it was lawfull for the Iewes to set and appoint whome they would to rule the temple, but that the President of the Prouince did appoint one to haue the gouernment of the temple. And hee saith that they were brought without violence, that is, that they were not drawen violently: least any tumult shoulde arise. So that whereas they neither feare nor reuerence God, they are afraide of men. The Apostles also doe shew their modestie in that, that whereas they are garded with a great number of men, yet doe they suffer themselves to be led away by the officers, least they shoulde be authours of any tumult.

2. Cor. 11.

14.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the councel: and the chief priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we in commaunding, commaund you, that you shoulde not teach in this name? And beholde yee haue filled Ierusalem with your doctrine, and you will bring the blood of this man vpon vs.

28 The chiefe Priest layeth two crimes to the charge of the Apostles. For hee accuseth them of contumacie or stubbornnesse, because they obeyed not the decree of the Councell. In the second member he bewrayeth an euill conscience, or at least he sheweth that he handeled rather a priuate businesse then any publike cause. For he complaineth that the Apostles will cause the Priestes and the Scribes to be hated for the death of Christe. Beholde therefore, what that is which nettleteth them, because they feare the reuenge and punishment of wicked murder. Hee pretendeth at the first doctrine: but we may gather out of the ende, that hee was not so carefull for doctrine. In the meane season hee accuseth the Apostles of sedition: for he taketh that for a thing which all men for the most part did graunt: that Christ was put to death iustlic. Notwithstanding this is the pincipall point of the accusation, that they did not obey the commaundement of the Priestes. It was an haynous offence not to obey the chief Priest: how much more haynous was it then to despise the whole order? But the chiefe Priest doeth not consider what is his dutie towarde God and the Church: he abuseth his authoritie tyrannously, as if the same were not vnder any lawes. As the Pope dealeth with vs at this day. For seeing that hee taketh to himselfe an vnbrideled authoritie & gouernment, he feareth not to condemne vs for Schismatikes, so soone as he seeth vs refuse his decrees. For hee catcheth at these sentences. He which despiseth you, despiseth me: & thereupon he concludeth that we will rebel against God. But if hee will bee hearde as the ambassadour of Christ, he must speake out of the mouth of Christ.

Luke. 10. 16

Nowe forasmuch as he doth manifestly play the minister of Satan: he boroweth authoritie without shame and colour, of the name of Christe:

Yea the very forme of speech which the chiefe Priest vseth, doth proue, how carelesly spirituall tyrants, who vsurp such authoritie and Lordship as is not subiect to the word of God, dare graunt libertie to themselves to attempt whatsoeuer please them. With a commaundement (saith he) haue we commaunded. Whence commeth such strait rigor, saue onely because they think that all that must bee receiued without exception which they shall commaund?

29 And Peter and the Apostles answering, said, Wee ought rather to obey God than men.

30 The God of our fathers hath raised vp Iesus, whom ye slue, hanging him vpon a tree.

31 Him God hath lifted vp with his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, to giue repentance to Israel, and remission of sinnes.

Or things 32 And we are his witnesses of these words: and the holy Ghost also, whom God hath giuen to them that obey him.

33 And when they heard these things, they were cut in sunder, and would slea them.

29 This is the summe of their answer. It is lawfull for them, nay they ought to prefer God before men. God commaundeth vs to beare witness of Christ: therefore it is in vain for you to commaund vs to keepe silence. But I haue declared before in the third chap. when this sentence taketh place, that we ought rather to obey God than men: God doth set men ouer vs in such sort with power, that he keepeth stil his own autoritie safe & sound. Therefore we must obey rulers so far, that the commaundement of God be not broken. Whereas power & authoritie is lawfully vsed, then, it is out of season to make comparison between god & man. If a faithfull pastor do commaund or forbid out of the word of god, it shalbe in vain for me which are stubborn to obiect, that we ought to obey god. For god will be heard by man. Yea man is nothing els but an instrument of God. If a magistrate do his dutie as he ought, a man shal in vain say that he is contrary to god, seing that he dissenteth in nothing: yea rather the contrary rule is then in force. We must obey gods ministers & officers if we will obey him. But so soone as rulers do leade vs away from the obedience of God, because they striue against God with sacrilegious boldnesse, their pride must be abated, that God may be aboue all in authoritie. Then all smokes of honour vanish away. For God doth not vouchsafe to bestowe honorable titles vpon men, to the end they may darken his glory. Therefore if a father being not content with his owne estate, doe assay to take from God the chiefe honour of a father, hee is nothing els but a man. If a King, or Ruler, or Magistrate, doe become so loslie, that hee diminisheth the honour and authoritie of God, hee is but a manne. Wee must thus thinke also of Pastors. For he which goeth beyond his bounds in his office (because he setteth himself against God) must bee dispoyled of his honour, least vnder a colour or visure hee deceiue. The office of a Pastour is verie excellent, the authoritie of the Church is great, yet so that no parte of Gods power and, Christes mastershippe bee diminished. Whence wee may easilie gather that the pryde of the

Pope

Pope is ridiculous, who, when as he treadeth vnder foot the whole kingdom of Christ, and doth set himself openly against God, will yet neuertheless he hid vnder the name of Christ.

30 *The God of our fathers.* They discende vnto the matter whereof they are to speake, that they may declare that they made small account of the commandement of the priestes, not without cause ne yet vnadvisedly. For (as I haue already said) the comparison between God & man taketh no place saue onely when there is some contrarietie. Therefore they proue by this, that they are enforced by the fear of god to refuse the commandement of the priestes: because God commaundeth that which they forbid. Therefore first of all they say that God had raised vp Christ, after the common custome of the scriptures. For this speech is common, that God raised vp prophetes or iudges, or rather ministers, whom hee determined to vse vnto some great worke: which importeth as much as that all excellencie of nature is weak, vnlesse God do furnish those with singular giftes, whom he preferreth vnto any excellent office. Peraduenture also they allude vnto that famous place of Moses, which Peter cited in his first sermon. They cite the *God of the fathers* by name as the author, that they may declare that they bring in no new form of religion, neither yet will they enforce vpon the people any newe God. For they were to make answer to that false slander, that they went about to lead away the people from the law and the prophets. Not that they allow all that worship which was vsed by the fathers, as profane men are content with this onely argument, that the fathers taught thus, that they doe all things according to the custom and decree of their auncetours: but the Apostles speak in this place of these *fathers* with whom God hath made his couenant, who followed right and pure doctrine, who imbraced the promise of saluation with true faith, finally, who had their beginning of the heavenly Father, & who through the onely begotten sonne of God were the children of God together with their posteritie.

Deut. 18. 18
before. 3. 22

Whom ye. In this member the apostles declare vnto them plainly that they were the enemies of god, who wold haue the chief honor giuen the as vnto the gouernours and prelates of the church. Whereupon it followeth that they are vnworthie euen of the smallest authoritie. Although there is also a preuention, being a token of boldnesse, when as hee speaketh of that thing boldly and freely, which they did account a shamefull thing: to wit, least any part of Christs glory should seem to be diminished because hee suffered a slanderous death vppon the crosse: as if it had beene saide, You haue slaine him: neither was your crueltie satisfied with a plaine and common death: for he was hanged vppon a tree. But neither could death extinguish his power, neither could that shame and reproch which he suffered amongst you, take away his honour. Therefore the calling of God continueth firme and stable. Therefore as the Apostles hit the priestes in the teeth with that wickednes and hainous offence which they had committed: so they preuent by a graunting to expresse the manner of the reprochfull death which Christe suffered, least the authors of the wickednes triumph, as hauing gotten the victorie.

31 *Him hath God lifted vp.* Therefore the Apostles do signifie that whatsoeuer the wicked do go about, it did not hinder and keepe backe Christ from fulfilling his function which was enioined him by his father. The *right hand of God* is taken for his power. Neither is the same Metaphor vsed in this place, which we had before chap. 2. and which is common elsewhere, when Christ is said to be lift vp vnto the right hand of the father: but the meaning of this place is, that Christ which was slain by the hand of man, was lift vp on high by the power of God, that he might bear rule ouer angels and men. And this seemeth secretly to be set against all the enterprises of Satan & the world: as if he should say that they shal haue no good successe, because they shal neuer climbe so high, as to hinder the hand of God, whereby hee hath both wrought mightily already in his only begotten Sonne, neither will he euer cease to worke. Yet the end is added also, that he may be a captain & Sauior. For so often as god did put his people in hope of saluation, he was wont to promise a prince or a king, by whose hand he would restore all things. The Apostles do testify that this principallitie was graunted to Christ. Notwithstanding they do more plainly expresse his office by the other adiunct. The summe is this, that Christ is placed in the highest degree of honor, that he may gouerne the people of god: and not that only, but that he may shew himself to be a sauing captain, or the authour of saluation.

To giue repentance. They shew in this place howe Christe reigneth to saue the people: to wit, when he bringeth his own to repentance, & doth reconcile them vnto God through the remission of sinnes. Furthermore we know that the summe of the gospel is contained in these two things. Wherefore the Apostles do not onely stand vpon the defence of their cause, but they preach the office of Christ plentifully, that they may win euen some of the mortall enemies of Christ, if it may be. Furthermore, wee haue declared before, what the word *repentance* doth signifie: to wit, that it is an inward turning of man vnto god, which sheweth it self afterwards by external workes. For Christ giueth vs the Spirit of regeneration for this cause, that he may renue vs inwardly: to the ende that a new life may afterward follow the newnesse of the minde and heart. And if it belong to Christ to giue repentaunce, then it followeth that it is not a thing which is in mans power. And surely seeing that it is a certaine wonderfull reformation or fashioning again, which maketh vs new creatures, repayreth in vs the image of God, bringeth vs out of the bondage of sin, vnto the obedience of righteousness: it is a thing as impossible for men to conuert themselves, as to create themselves. Repentaunce is I graunt a voluntarie conuersion, but whence haue we this will, saue onely because God chaungeth our heart, that it may bee made fleshie of a stonie heart: flexible of hard and stubborne: and finally, right of wicked? And this cometh to passe when Christ regenerateth vs by his Spirit. Neither is this giuen in a moment, but it must bee increased dailey during our whole life: vntill we be fully ioyned to God: which shal be then, when we haue put off our flesh. This is in deed the beginning of repentaunce when a man who before was turned away from God, renounceth the worlde

world, and himselfe, and doth purpose to lead a newe life. But because when wee haue entred the way, wee are farre from the marke, wee must needs goe forward continually. Wee haue both, through the benefit of Christ. For as he beginneth repentaunce in vs, so doeth hee also giue vs perseuerance. This is an inestimable grace: but it should doe vs but a little good, vnlesse it were coupled with forgiuenesse of sinnes. For Christe doth both finde vs the enemies of God at the first, and also there are alwayes vices remaining in vs, which cause disagreement between him & vs: so that he may iustly be offended with vs, rather than mercifull vnto vs. And therein doeth our righteousness consist, if God doe not impute our sinnes vnto vs. Therefore this latter grace must neuer bee separated from the former. Yea rather the Gospell shall be lame and corrupt, vnlesse it consist vpon these two members, that is, vnlesse men bee taught, that they are reconciled to God by Christe, by the free imputation of righteousness, and that they are fashioned againe vnto newnesse of life by the Spirit of regeneration. So that wee vnderstand briefly howe wee must obtaine saluation in Christ.

32. *And we are his witnesses.* After that they haue declared that their doctrine came from god, they discend now vnto the other part: that they speake as they were commaunded by god, least they seeme to attempt any thing vnadvisedly. For this also was a necessarie defence: as it is for all the ministers of the Gospell: to wit, that they make this openly known to all men, that they teach nothing but that which they haue receiued of God. Secondly, that they are called hieunto, so that they cannot auoide the necessitie of teaching vnlesse they will resist God. Luke putteth *wordes* in this place in steede of things, according to the Hebrew phrase. Although if any man had rather vnderstand it of the speech it self, I doe not denie but that it may be so. The summe is, seeing they are brought forth by God to be witnesses, they may not giue back, but they must publish that which he hath commaunded.

And also the spirit. They confirm their calling by the effect. For this was as a seale to approue their doctrine, seeing that God gaue the holie Spirit to those which beleeued. For as much as it appeared manifestly by this that hee allowed the faith of the Gospell, and it was acceptable to him. In that they say, *to those which obey him*, I referre it vnto Christ: as if they shuld haue said, Those which beleeu in Christ, are plentifully rewarded for their obedience. Therefore god wil haue Christ obeyed wherfore euē our ministerie doth please him in that thing. Yet here may a questiō be moued, seeing that we haue faith by the reuelatiō of the spirit how is it said in this place that the same is giue after faith? I answer, that the gift of tongues, of prophesie, of interpretation, of healing, and suche like, are spoken of in this place, wherwith god did beautifie his Church. As Paul saith, wher he asketh the Galathiās, Whether they receiued the Spirit by the law or by the hearing of faith. Therefore the illumination of the spirit goth before faith, because it is the cause therof: but there folow other graces after ward, that we may go forward according to that, To him that hath, shal be giue. And if we will be enriched euē now & then

Gal. 3. 2.
Mat. 13. 12.

with new giftes of the Spirite, let vs holde out vnto God the lappe of faith. But the reward wherwith our want of faith is rewarded at this day, is farre vnlike, for the most part beeing destitute of the Spirite of God: doth neither see nor vnderstand any thing.

33 *They were cut in sunder.* The Priestes ought to haue beene thorowly moued though they had had harts of yron: but they burst. Whence we gather, that no reasons can preuaile with the reprobate, to bring the vnto the obedience of Christe. For vnlesse God speake within, the outward doctrine shall be able to doe nothing els but to beat the eares. The Apostles were able so to ouercome their enemies, that they shoulde not haue hadde one worde to say: but their furie was so vitamed and vnbrideled, that they do rather goe madde. Yet wee must therewithall note the force of the worde: because although the reprobate are not thereby changed, that they may become better, yet it pearceth into their harts, so that it vrgeth their consciences. For thence springeth their furie, because they saw themselues vrged by their iudge. They would gladly mocke all the Gospell. as they attempt whatsoeuer they canne, that they may count it as nothing: but there is in the same a certaine hidden maiestie, which driueth away mightilie all their delicacie. And chiefly when they are cited by the sounde of the trumpet to appeare before the iudgement seat of GOD, then appeareth their madnesse and rage.

34 *And a certaine Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the lawe, preious to all the people, rising in the counsell, commaunded the Apostles to be carried out a little space.*

35 *Then he said vnto them, Men of Israel, take heed to your selues, what yee intend to do touching these men.*

36 *For before these dayes there arose one Theudas, saying that he was som great man, to whome consented a number of men about foure hundred: who perished, & they were all scattered abroad which hadde obeyed him, and were brought to nought.*

37 *After him arose one Iudas of Galilee, in the dayes of the tribute, and led away much people after him, and he likewise perished, and al which had obeyed him, were scattered abroad.*

38 *Now therefore I say vnto you, Abstain from these men, and let them alone. For if this counsell or this worke be of men, it shall come to nought.*

39 *But if it be of god, you cannot destroy it: least at any time ye be found to fight with God.*

34 Luke sheweth nowe after what manner God brought to nought that furie of the wicked. They were purposed to put the Apostles to death: Gamaliel standeth vp amidst the, to break off that mad consultation. Furthermore, hee noteth the circumstances, to the ende wee may knowe how it could be, that one man could preuaile so much against so many. Hee saith hee was a Pharisee, which sect was in great estimation as we knowe. Hee saith that hee was in price or honoured amongst the people: And they feared the people. Heereby it commeth to passe that they are the more afraide to doe anye thinge contrary to
his

his minde. So God doeth oftentimes set suddain terrors against his enemies (when they looke not for them) to stay their violence. Furthermore Gamaliel commaundeth the Apostles to goe aside, least they should be the more imboldned by his words. For we must not think that he spake thus, because he did allowe the doctrine of the Gospel, or that he meant to defende the same: but because he saw all the rest enflamed with furie, hee being a man moderate and courteous, doeth with sober speech temper that excesse. But if we consider all things well, this iudgement and opinion is vnmecte for a wise man. I knowe that many count it as an Oracle: but it appeareth sufficiently heereby that they iudge amisse, because by this meanes men should abstain from al punishments, neither were any wicked fact any longer to be corrected. Yea all helpes of life were to be refused, which we cannot prolong one moment. Both things are true, that no indeuours of men can destroy that which is of God: and that that which is of men, is not so stronge that it can stande. But he gathereth amisse hence, that men must sit still and say nothing in the meane season. We must rather marke what God commaundeth vs to doe: and he will haue vs to restraine wickednes. To this ende hath he appointed Magistrates, and armed them with the sword. To this end hath he set Elders ouer his Church, to bring the froward in order, and that they may not suffer sinne licentiously to rage without punishment. Therefore it is gathered amisse, that wee must refraine from punishing because God is sufficient of himselfe, to take away euils. Although his whole counsell is such, Gamaliel willeth the Scribes and Elders, to take heed that they make not open warre against God. And he speaketh as it were touching a doubtfull matter. Whereby it appeareth that he hath no certaintie from the foundation: when as he doubteth in the qualitie of the cause, neither dare set downe whether it be good or euil, but doth onely commaund to deferre it for a time, vntill the cause appeare more plainly. In summe, Gamaliel setteth an euill consequent from true grounds: because he applieth that amisse vnto the externall office and manner of doing, which ought to serue for faith onely. On the other side, let this bee our Logike, That which is of God, must needes stande though all the whole world say nay: therefore faith must stand without all feare against all the assaults of Satan and men, seeing faith is vnderpropped and supported with the eternall truth of God: although heauen fall, our saluation is safe, which hath God to be the author and keeper thereof: because God doeth defende the kingdome of Christ, it can neuer bee ouerthrowne with any violence: because the doctrine of the Gospel is grounded in God, howsoeuer men resist or shake the same, yet shall it neuerthelessse continue firme. Againe, although the wicked attempt whatsoever they can, and seeke al meanes to destroy the church, although they furiously strue against Christ and his Church so much as they are able, yet they shall not preuaile, because it is the propertie of God to bring the counsels of men to naught: and by this meanes doeth he punish their rashnesse. We see that both members are well applied to faith. But in the meane season there is no cause why the seruantes of Christ

Christ should be lesse diligent in maintaining the truth: why they should suffer the Church to decay through their fault: why they should carelesly winke at their wickednesse who endeour to turne all thinges topsie turuie.

36 *There arose one Theudas.* If we credit Iosephus, Gamaliel altereth in this place the true course of the historie. For hee reporteth that Iudas Gaulanites, who was borne in Gamala, at such time as *Quirinius*, or *Cyrenius* was Proconsull, did raise a tumult with his adherentes, because they woulde not haue their goods taxed: and that *Theudas* at such time as *Cuspius Fadus* was Procuratour, did boast that hee was a Prophet of God. And *Fadus* was sent into Iudea by *Claudius Caesar*. The former historie is recorded in the eighteenth booke of Antiquities: and the other in the twentieth. But I thinke that when Luke saith, *After him was there one Iudas*: he meant not to note the course of time as if he were the latter: but forasmuch as Gamaliel brought in two like examples, he might put the one in place of the other, without hauing respect of time. Therefore the worde *post*, is as much as Moreouer, or besides. Furthermore euen these examples wherewith Gamaliel confirmeth his opinion, doe not sufficiently agree with the present cause. For, because they did not by and by resist Iudas, that sedition which he had raised, was the occasion of many murders, and at length he was vanquished with hand and weapon. Theudas also had done farre more hurt, vnlesse he had beene put to flight in time by *Cuspius Fadus*. But Gamaliel hath respect vnto this alone, that men haue vn lucky successe when as they auance themselves vnadvisedly: and that commeth to passe by the iust iudgement of God. But because the Priestes refuse to harken when God giueth them good counsell, they are worthy to be made amased by mā with frivulous reasons, waucering hither & thither through foolish perplexitie. Furthermore if wee cast the time, wee shall finde that it was twelue yeeres at least after the death of Christ, before the Apostles were beaten. For vnto the fve yeeres, which remained of the gouernement of *Tyberius*, we must adde three and one halfe, which *Caligula* reigned. *Fadus* was not sent by *Claudius* into Iudea, before the second or thirde yeere of his reigne. Gamaliel rehearseth not the act within a day or two after. Therefore that space of time is complete whereof I spake. Wherefore the constancie of the Apostles was the more excellent, who though they bee so euill rewarded for those longe paines which they had endured, yet are they not discouraged, neither doe they cease to holde on as they had begunne.

That he was some great man. Some bookes haue, Saying that hee was some bodie: yet both carrie one sense. For he boasted that he was such a Prophet, that hee could drie vp Iordan, that those which were with him might goe ouer drie foote. Neuerthelesse we see howe farre Gamaliel is from true knowledge, who compareth the holy Ministers of Christ vnto seducers and robbers: although hee mitigateth his words afterwarde, and inclining towarde the better part, leaueth it indifferent, whether they haue taken this matter in hande hauing God for
their

their authour or noe. Yet hee speaketh doubtfullie, because hee prouideth onely for quietnesse, all enquire being set a parte. This is one lie to bee allowed in his speech, that hee feareth the wicked from wicked boldnesse, because there is nothing more to be feared than to strue against God.

40 *And they obeyed him:*

And when they had called the Apostles, having beaten them, they commaunded them that they shoulde not speake in the name of Iesus, and they let them goe.

41 *Therefore they went reioicing from the face of the counsell, because they were counted worthy, to suffer reproch for his name.*

42 *And they did not cease daily in the Temple, and in euery house to teach and preach Christ Iesus.*

40 *Having beaten them, they commaunded.* He saith that Gamaliel his counsel was allowed: yet the Apostles are beaten, and forbidden to preach. Hereby wee gather how great the rage of the enimies was, who being now pacified or at least mitigated, doe yet notwithstanding rage immoderatlie. And it appeareth also what euill successe those doubtfull counsels haue, wherein men alone are respected, and the trueth of God set aside. Gamaliel obtineth thus much, that the liues of the Apostles may be saued, but in the meane season, the sonne of God is blasphemed & slandered in their person. The truth of the Gospel is buried in eternall silence, so much as in the enimies lyeth. God surely doth by this meanes wonderfully spread abroad his worde: yet that counsel ceaseth not to be euill. Which we must note for this cause, because most men at this day doe thinke, that they doe not a little obey God, if they saue the liues of those men which come in hazard for the doctrine of the Gospel, or somewhat appease the enimies who are otherwise bloodie: in the meane season they are not afraide to driue them vnto the wicked denial of Christ, the confessing of whom is farre more precious in the sight of God, then the life of all men. But what could they doe, who casting away all care of godlinesse, go about to redeeme Gods fauour with the dutie of courtesie?

41 *Then they went reioicing.* Wee must not thinke that the Apostles were so senselesse, but that they felt some shame, and did also lament, when they felt the punishment: for they had not quite put of nature: but when they considered the cause, then ioy gat the vpper hande. So the faithfull must bee two manner of wayes affectioned so often as they suffer persecution for the Gospel, they must bee touched with the bitterness of punishmentes, yet so that they ouercome this sorrowe with spirituall ioy. For they shoulde haue chaunged their minde, and stricken saile by and by, vlesse they had beene strengthened and encouraged by that ioie. And it is not to be doubted but that euen death was sweet and pleasant to Peter on this fashion, which notwithstanding the Lord doth testifie shalbe bitter vnto him.

Let vs therefore learne that we must wraſtle with ſorrow and care, that we hold on couragiously to ſuffer the croſſe, and that we beare the ſame when it is laid vpon vs.

That they were counted worthie. This might ſeeme at the firſt bluſh abſurde, in that Luke placeth honour in reproch: but the diſagreement which is betweene God and the worlde cauſeth this, that that which is counted amongſt men moſt reprochfull, excelleth in dignitie and glory in the ſight of God & his angles. We know that the kind of death which Chriſt ſuffered, was of all other moſt ſhamefull, and yet did he triumph moſt noble vpon the croſſe: ſo when we are made like vnto him, we may worthily boaſt that it is a point of ſingular excellencie, that we ſuffer rebuke in the ſight of the worlde. Thus doeth Paul boaſt of the markes of Chriſt. For wee muſt heere reſpect the cauſe, which doeth aſſociat vs vnto Chriſt, who doth not onely ſwallow vp the ſhame of the worlde with his glorie, but doth alſo turne reproches, ſlaunders, and mockes of the worlde into great honour. Wherefore it is no maruell that there bee ſo fewe found which are ſtronger & ſtout to beare the croſſe, becauſe we are almoſt all drowned & ouerwhelmed with the ſenſe of the fleſh: and there is ſcarſe one amongſt an hundreth which conſidereth that the reproch of Chriſt doth farre excell all the triumphes of the worlde, which is the onely matter of comfort. Wherefore we muſt uſe the greater diligence in thinking vpon this ſentence: that we are at this day made partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt, that we may be partakers of his glorie.

Galat. 6.17.

42 *They ceaſed not.* Conſtancie did alſo accompany their ioy. For how is it that we are diſcouraged with perſecution, ſaue onely becauſe none liſteth vp himſelfe vnto Chriſt, that he may in minde lay hold vpon the fruite of victorie, and ſo be pricked forward vnto patience? But that man which thinketh with himſelfe that hee is happie when hee ſuffereth for Chriſts ſake, ſhall neuer faint, though hee muſt ſuffer harde conſlicts. Therefore the Apoſtles are after a ſort armed with ſtripes, ſo that they valiantly make haſte vnto death. Therefore woe be to our daintineſſe, who hauing ſuffered a litle perſecution, do by and by reſigne vp the light to another, as if we were now old worne ſouldiers.

CHAP. VI.

1 **A**ND in thoſe dayes, when the number of the diſciples grewe, there aroſe a murmuring of the Greekes againſt the Hebrewes, becauſe their widowes were deſpiſed in the daily miniſterie.

2 Therefore when the twelue had called vnto them the multitude of the diſciples, they ſaid "It doth not pleaſe that we ſhould ſerue tables, hauing left the word of God.

3 Therefore brethren, looke out ſeuene men of you, of knowne honeſtie, full of the holy Ghoſt, and of wiſedome, whom we will appoint ouer this buſineſſe,

4 And wee will giue our ſelues vnto prayer, and to the miniſtration of the word.

5 The ſpeech pleaſed the whole multitude: and they choſe Stephen, a man full of faith and the holy Ghoſt: and Philip and Prochorus, and Timon, and Par-

menas,

* or It is not
good.

menas, and Nicolas a Proselyte of Antioch.

6 *These did they set before the Apostles: and when they had praised, they laide their hands vpon them.*

1 Luke declareth here vpon what occasion, and to what ende, and also with what rite Deacons were first made. He saith, When there arose a murmuring amongst the Disciples, it was appeased by this remedie, as it is said in the common prouerbe, Good lawes haue taken their beginning of euill manners. And it may seeme to be a straunge thing, seeing that this is a function so excellent and so necessarie in the Church, why it came not into the Apostles mindes at the first, before there was any such occasion ministred, to appoint Deacons, and why the Spirit of God did not giue them such counsell which they take now, being as it were enforced thereunto. But that which happened, was both better then, and is also more profitable for vs at this day, to bee vnto vs an example. If the Apostles had spoken of chusing Deacons, before any necessity did require the same: they should not haue had the people so ready: they should haue seemed to auoid labour and trouble: many would not haue offered so liberally into the hands of other men. Therefore it was requisite that the faithfull shoulde bee conuict by experience, that they might choose Deacons willingly, whom they saw they could not want: and that through their owne fault. We learne in this historie, that the Church cannot bee so framed by and by, but that there remaine somewhat to be amended, neither can so great a building bee so finished in one day, that there may not something be added to make the same perfect. Furthermore we learne that there is no ordinance of God so holie and laudable, which is not either corrupt or made vnprofitable through the faulte of men. Wee woonder that thinges are neuer so well ordered in the worlde, but that there is alwayes some euill mixed with the good; but it is the wickednesse and corruption of our nature which causeth this. That was indeede a godly order wherof Luke made mention before, when the goods of all men being consecrated to God, were distributed to euery man as hee had neede: when as the Apostles being as it were the stewardest of God and the poore, had the chiefe gouernment of the almes. But shortly after there ariseth a murmuring which troubleth this order. Here appereth that corruption of me wherof I haue spoken, which doeth not suffer vs to vse our good things. Wee must also marke the subtiltie of Satan, who to the end he may take from vs the vse of the giftes of God, goeth about this continually, that it may not remaine pure and sounde: but that being mixed with other discommodities, it may first be suspected, secondly loathed, and lastly quite taken away. But the Apostles haue taught vs by their example that we must not yeelde vnto such engines and policies of Satan. For they do not thinke it meete (being offended with the murmuring) to take away that ministry which they know pleaseth God: but rather inuent a remedie whereby the offence may be taken away, and that may bee retained which is Gods. Thus must we doe. For what offences soeuer Satan raise, we must
take

take good heede that he take not from vs those ordinances which are otherwise wholefome.

The number encreasing. We ought to wish for nothing more then that God woulde encrease his Church, and gather together many on euerie side vnto his people: but the corruption of our nature hindereth vs from hauing any thing good or happie in all pointes. For there arise many discommodities also, euen of the encreasing of the Church. For it is a harde matter to keepe many hypocrites from creeping into the multitude, whose wickednesse is not by and by discovered, vntill such time as they haue infected some part of the flocke with their infection. Moreover many wicked, froward, & dissolute persons, do insinuate themselves vnder a false colour of repentance. And that I may passe ouer innumerable things, there is neuer such agreement amongst many, but that according to the diuersitie of their maners, their opinions are also diuers: so that one thing cannot please all alike. This offence causeth many to be desirous to choose a few for a Church, it causeth them to loath or else to hate a multitude. But no trouble, ne irksomnes ought so much to preuaile, but that we must alwaies be desirous to haue the Church encreased, but that we must studdie to enlarge the same, but that we must cherish so much as in vs lieth, vnitie, with the whole body.

A murmuring of the Greekes. Heereby it appeareth that they were not fully regenerate by the Spirite of God, to whom the diuersitie of nation and countrie ministreth occasion of disagreement. For in Christ there is neither Iewe nor Grecian: therefore this indignation smelleth of the flesh and the world. Wherefore wee must take good heede that the like fault be not founde in vs. There is another faulte, in that they declare their indignation by murmuring. Furthermore it is vncertaine whether the complaint were true or no. For when Luke saith that the Greekes murmured, because their widowes were not honoured, he sheweth not what was done in deed, but what they thought was done. And it may be that for as much as the Apostles did preferre the Iewes, because they were better knowne, the Greekes did thinke (though falsely,) that their widowes were despised as straungers. And this seemeth to bee more like to be true. Furthermore the worde *ministring* may bee expounded two manner of wayes, actiuely or passiuely. For wee knowe that at the first there were widowes chosen vnto the ministration. Notwithstanding I doerather thinke that the Greekes did complaine, because their widowes were not so liberallie relieued as they wished. So that the ministration shall bee that daylie distribution which was wont to be made.

2 *The twelue hauing called the multitude vnto them.* It is a point of patience and meekenes that the Apostles are no more moued: It is a point of prudence and godly carefulnesse, in that they preuent the euil which began to arise, without deferring the remedie. For after that euery dissension and diuision hath gathered strength, it is a wound hard to be cured. By this assemblie it appeareth that the Church was gouerned by order and reason, so that the Apostles had the chiefeest authoritie, and that

that yet they did impart their counsels and purposes vnto the people. Again we must note that the faithfull or Christians are in this place called disciples, in whom that of Isaias must be fulfilled, That they were all taught of God. And againe that of Ieremie, They shal all know God from the least to the greatest.

It pleaseth not. It is in Greeke *ouc arestion*. By which word the Grecians do nowe expresse euery opinion or decree which is better then other, or which is to be preferred as being better. I doe rather thinke that the Apostles declare what is profitable, than simplie what they haue decreed. But if it bee not expedient for them to meddle with this businesse, they seeme not to acknowledg some fault in that that they ministred hitherto. And surely that is true, that, Vse is the father of wisdom. Wherefore there shall be no absurditie, if we shal say, that the Apostles desire of the Church to bee vnburdened of that function, after that they haue tried that it is not meete for them. But if there were any fault, it ought rather to be ascribed vnto necessitie, than vnto them. For they tooke not this burthen vpon them greedily, but seeing there was no other way as yet, they had leiser burthen themselues out of measure, than that the poore should be forslowd. And when as they say that it is not meete that they shoulde bee occupied in providing for the poore, their meaning is that they are vnable to endure both burthens, so that they must needs let the one alone. For it is as if they should say: If thou wilt enioy our ministry in the preaching of the Gospel, deliuer vs from the charge of the poore, because we are not able to do both. But this seemeth to be spoken out of season by them, because they had not left the charge of teaching before, although they had the ouersight of the almes. I answer, for as much as the administration was confused, they were so inwrapped, that they could not wholly attend vpon doctrine, as was meete. Therefore they refuse that function which draweth them away from the free and perfect charge of teaching. Notwithstanding we may not thinke that they had quite cast away all care of the poore, but that they did onely seek somewhat to be lightned & eased, that they might attend vpon their office. And in the meane season they declare that the ministerie of the word is so painefull, that it requireth a whole man, neither will it suffer him to be occupied about any other businesse. Which if it had bene well considered, there had ben a farre other order taken in the Church. The popish bishops did sack vp great riches vnder colour of the ministration or deacoship: neuertheles they intangled theselues in diuers businesses: which they were scarce able to overcome though euery one of them had had ten heads. Notwithstanding such is their wickednesse that they say that there can be no church, vnlesse it be drowned in this depth: neither do they cease to brag & boast that they are the successors of the Apostles whereas there is nothing which appeareth to bee more contrary. They were carefull for this, that they might not bee occupied about seruing of tables, and so be compelled to leaue their owne bankets. For whosoever is carefull for his owne table, hee taketh leaue to bee vacant from other mens tables. But omitting these things, let vs marke this sentence.

We

We know what a holy thing it is to be carefull for the poore. Therefore for as much as the Apostles prefer the preaching of the Gospell before it, wee gather thereby that no obedience is more acceptable to God. Notwithstanding the hardnes is also declared, whē as they say that they cannot discharge both these duties. Surely we are not better than they. Therefore let euery one of vs that is called vnto the functiō of teaching addiēt himselfe whollie to order this his estate well. For we are inclined to nothing more than to fall to slouthfulnes. Again the flesh ministreth goodly clokes and colours, so that those men cannot see by and by that they are lead away from their calling, which inwrappe themselves in straunge businesse. Wherefor to the end Ministers may pricke forward themselves to do their ducie, let them remember this saying of the Apostles oftentimes, wherein they declare that forasmuch as they are called vnto the function of teaching, they must not any longer take charge of the poore. Therefore what excuses haue prophane affaires (taken in hand euen for some priuate gaine) where that is set aside which is otherwise accounted no small part of the worship of God.

3 *Therefore breshren looke out.* Now we see to what end Deacons were made: The worde it selfe is in deede generall, yet is it properly taken for those which are stewards for the poore. Whereby it appeareth howe licenciously the Papists doe mocke God and men, who assigne vnto their Deacons no other office but this, to haue the charge of the patten and Chalice. Surelie we neede no long disputation to proue, that they agree in no point with the Apostles. But if the readers bee desirous to see anie more concerning this point, they may re paire vnto our Institution. As touching this present place, the Church is permitted to choose. For it is tyrannous if any one man appoint or make ministers, at his pleasure. Therefore this is the most lawful way, that those be chosen by common voices, who are to take vpon them any publike function in the Church. And the Apostles prescribe what manner persons ought to be chosen: to wit, men of tried honestie and credit, men endewed with wisdom and other gifts of the Spirite. And this is the meane betweene tyranny and confused libertie, that nothing be done without the consent and approbation of the people: yet so that the pastours moderate and gouerne this action, that their authoritie may be as a bridle, to keepe vnder the people, least they passe their bounds too much. In the meane season this is worth the noting, that the Apostles prescribe an order vnto the faithfull, least they appoint any saue those which are fit. For wee doe God no small iniurie, if wee take all that comē to hande to gouerne his house. Therefore we must vse great circumspection, that we choose none vnto the holy function of the Church, vnlesse we haue some triall of him first. The number of Seauen is applied vnto the present necessitie: least any man shoulde thinke that there is some mysterie comprehended vnder the same. Whereas Luke saith, *full of the Spirit* and wisdom, I do interpret it thus: that it is requisite that they bee furnished both with other gifts of the Spirit, and also with wisdom, without which that function cannot bee exercised well: both that they may beware of the liegerde-

mane of those men, who being too much giuen vnto begging, require that which is necessary for the pouertie of the brethren: and also of their slanderers, who cease not to backbite though they haue none occasion giuen them. For that function is not onely painefull, but also subiect to manie vngodly murmurings.

4 And we will giue our selues vnto prayer. They shewe againe that they haue too much busines otherwise, wherein they may exercise themselues during their whole life. For the olde prouerbe agreeth hereunto verie fitlie, which was vsed sometimes in the solemne rites, Doe this. Therefore they vse the word *proscartesci*, which signifieth to be as it were fastned and tyed to any thing. Therefore Pastours must not thinke, that they haue so done their dutie that they need to do no more, when they haue daily spent some time in teaching. There is another manner of study, another maner of zeale, another maner of continuance required, that they may in deede boast that they are wholie giuen to that thing. They adioyne thereunto prayer, not that they alone ought to pray (for that is an exercise common to all the Godly) but because they haue peculiar causes to praie aboue all other. There is no man which ought not to be carefull for the common saluation of the Church, howe much more then ought the Pastour, who hath that function enioyned him by name, to labour carefullie for it? So Moses did in deede exhort others vnto prayer, but hee went before them as the ring leader. And it is not without cause that Paule doth so often make mention of his prayers. Againe wee must alwayes remember that, that wee shall loose all our labour bestowed vpon plowing, sowing and watering, vnlesse the encrease come from heauen. Therefore it shal not suffice to take great paines in teaching, vnlesse wee require the blessing at the hands of the Lord, that our labour may not bee in vaine and vnfruitfull. Heereby it appeareth, that the exercise of prayer is not in vaine commended vnto the ministers of the word.

5 Stephen full of faith. Luke doth not therefore separate faith from the Spirit, as if it also were not a gift of the Spirit: but by Spirit hee meaneth other gifts wherewith Stephen was endewed, as zeale, wisdom, vprightnesse, brotherly loue, diligence, integritie of a good conscience: secondly hee expresseth the principall kinde. Therefore he signifieth that Stephen did excell first in faith, and secondly in other vertues, so that it was euident that hee had abundance of the grace of the Spirit. He doth not so greatlie commend the rest, because vndoubtedly they were inferiour to him. Moreouer the auncient writers, doe with great consent affirme that this Nicholas, which was one of the seauen, is the same of whom Iohn maketh mention in the Reuelation: to wit, that hee was an authour of a filthie and wicked sect: for as much as hee would haue women to be common. For which cause we must not be negligent in choosing ministers of the Church. For if the hypocrisie of men do deceiue euen those, which are most vigilant and careful to take heed, what shall befall the carelesse and negligent? Notwithstanding if when we haue vsed such circumspection as is meete, it so fall out that wee bee

Exod. 17.11

Rom. 1.10.

1. Corin. 3.7.

Apoca. 2.15

deceiued, let vs not be troubled out of measure, for as much as Luke saith, that euen the Apostles were subiect to this inconuenience. Some will aske this question, Then what good shall exhortation doe? to what vse serueth prayer? seeing that the successe it selfe sheweth that the election was not wholly gouerned by the Spirit of God? I answer, that this is a great matter that the Spirit directed their iudgements in choosing fixe men: in that he suffereth the Church to goe astray in the seuenth, it ought to seeme no absurd thing. For it is requisite that wee bee thus humbled diuers wayes, partly that the wicked and vngodly may exercise vs: partly that being taught by their example, wee may learne to examine our selues throughly, least there bee in vs any hidden and priuie starting corners of guile: partly that we may be more circumspect to discern, and that wee may as it were keepe watch continually, least wee bee disceiued by craftie and vnfaithfull men. Also it may bee that the ministerie of Nicolas was for a time profitable, and that he fel afterward into that monstrous error. And if so be it he fell in such sort from such an honorable degree; the higher that euery one of vs shall bee extolled, let him submit himselfe vnto God with modestie and feare.

6 *Having prayed they laide their hands vpon them.* Laying on of handes was a solemne signe of consecration vnder the Law. To this end do the Apostles now lay their hands vpon the Deacons, that they may knowe that they are offered to God. Notwithstanding because this Ceremonie should of it selfe bee vaine, they adde thereunto prayer, wherein the faithfull commende vnto God, those ministers whom they offer vnto him. This is referred vnto the Apostles, for all the people did not lay their hands vpon the Deacons: but when the Apostles did make prayer in the name of the Church, others also did adde their petitions. Hence we gather that the laying on of handes is a rite agreeing vnto order and comlineffe, for as much as the Apostles did vse the same: and yet that it hath of it selfe no force or power, but that the effect dependeth vpon the Spirit of God alone. Which is generally to bee thought of all Ceremonies.

7 *Furthermore the worde of God grew, and the number of the disciples encreased greatly at Ierusalem, and a greate companye of the Priestes obeyed the faith.*

8 *And Stephen full of faith and power, wrought woonders and great signes amongst the people.*

9 *But there arose certaine of the Synagogue, which was called the Synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians, and of Alexandria, and of those which were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

10 *And they could not resist the wisdom, and Spirit wherewith he spake.*

Luke setteth forth againe the encreasing of the Church, to the ende he may the better declare the power of God and his grace in the continual going forward thereof. This was an excellent work of God that the church should sodainly, and as it were in a moment be raised vp: but this

is worthy no lesse admiration, in that he furthereth that work which he had begun amidst so many lets, in that the number of those is encreased, whom to diminish, and so consequently to destroy the whole stocke, the world doeth so greatly labour. In that he saith that *the worde of God* did grow: his meaning is, that it was spread further abroad. The worde of God is saide to grow two manner of wayes, either when newe disciples are brought to obey the same, or as euery one of vs profiteth and goeth forward therein. Luke speaketh in this place of the former sort of encreasing, for hee expoundeth himselfe by and by, when hee speaketh of the number of the disciples. Notwithstanding hee restreyneth this so great an encreasing of faith, vnto one Cittie. For although it bee to bee thought, that the disciples were scattered abroad elsewhere, yet was there no certaine bodie saue onely at Ierusalem.

And a great companie. Seing that (in speaking properly) our faith doth obey the doctrine of the Gospell, it is a figuratiue speech vttered by Metonymia, when Luke saith, That they obeyed the faith. For the worde *faith* is taken by him for the worde of God, and the very profession of Christianitie. And he reckoneth vp the Priestes by name, because they were for the most parte enemies: for which cause it was a woonderfull worke of God, that some shoulde bee conuerted, and much more woonderfull that many. For at the first they raged against Christe with this bragge, Hath anie of the rulers beleueed in him? But this multitude which knoweth not the Lawe, are accursed.

And Stephen. Luke reciteth in this place a newe cumbate of the Church, whereby it appeareth that the glory of the Gospel was alwaies ioyned with the crosse and diuerse troubles. And this is the summe, that the Church was assaulted in the person of one man. Whereby it came to passe, that the enemies were the more bolde, and being imbrewed with innocent bloode, did rage forer than they had wont. For they had not gone as yet beyond the prison and roddes. But to the end we may knowe that the name of Christ was glorified as well in the life as in the death of Stephen, Luke saith at the first, that hee was *full of faith* and power. Whereby hee signifieth that his faith was excellent, and that he excelled in power to doe miracles. Neither ought wee to imagine perfection of faith, because he is saide to bee full of faith: but this manner of speaking, is much vsed in the Scripture, to call those Full of the giftes of God, who are abundantly endewed with the same. I take *power* (without question) for habilitie to doe miracles. *Faith* comprehendeth not onely the gifte of vnderstanding, but also the feruentnesse of zeale. For as much as his name was famous by reason of this excellencie, it came thereby to passe, that the rage of the wicked was bent against him as it were with one consent to ouerthrowe him. For so soone as the force and grace of the Spirit doeth shewe it selfe, the furie of Sathan is by and by prouoked.

And it shall appeare by the text that Stephen was diligent, and

couragious in spreading abroade the doctrine of the Gospel: but Luke passeth ouer that, being content to haue commended his faith; which could not be slothfull and sluggish.

And there arose certaine. This was the beginning of persecution, because the wicked after that they haue assaied in vaine to set themselves against Christ by disputing, when they saw that that former attempt did take none effect, they flie vnto slaunders, cauilling, and tumults, and at length they breake out into violence and murther. Therefore Luke meaneth by the worde *Rise*, that those of whom he speaketh, did assault the Gospel with their tongue, and did not by and by bring Stephen before the iudgement seate, but did first set vpon him by disputing against him. Furthermore hee signifieth that they were straungers, which liued in Iudea, either that they might exercise merchandise, or else get learning. Therefore he saith that some of them were *Cyrenians*, some of *Alexandria*, some of *Cilicia*, some of *Asia*. He saith that they were all of the Synagogue of the Libertines. It is to be thought that the free men of the citizens of Rome had caused a synagogue to bee builded of their owne charges, that it might bee proper to the Iewes which came togither out of the prouinces. Therefore those which were brought thither by the grace of God, and ought to haue embraced Christ so much the more willingly, assault him first, and inflame the furie of others as it were with a trumpet. Also Luke will in many other places afterward declare, that the Iewes which were scattered abroad in the prouinces, were most deadlie enemies to sounde doctrine, and most venemous in mouing tumults. Hee reckoneth vp manie, to the ende the victorie of the truth may be the more famous, whiles that many gathered of diuerse countries, depart being vanquished by one man, and it is not to bee doubted but that they were enforced to holde their peace with shame. Stephen had already woone great fauor, and gotten great dignitie by myracles. He answereth the disputers now in such sort, that hee getteth the vpper hande much. Hee putteth not that *Wisedome and Spirite* which he saith his aduersaries coule not gaine stande, as diuerse thinges. Therefore resolue these wordes thus: They coule not resist the wisedome which the Spirite of God gaue him. For Luke meant to expresse, that they fought not on both sides as men: but that the enemies of the Gospell were therefore discouraged & ouercome, because they did striue against the spirit of God, which spake by the mouth of Stephen. And forasmuch as Christ hath promised the same Spirite to all his seruants, let vs onely defende the truth faithfully, and let vs craue a mouth and wisedome of him: and we shall be sufficiently furnished to speake, so that neither the wit, neither yet the babling of our aduersaries shall bee able to make vs ashamed. So the Spirit was as effectuell in our time, in the mouth of the Martyrs which were burnt; and it vttereth the like force now daily, that though they were ignorant men, neuer trained vp in any schooles, yet did they make the chiefe diuines which maintained poperie no lesse astonished with their voice onely, than if it had thundered and lightened.

- 11 Then they suborned men which said: We haue heard this man speak blasphemous words against Moses, and God.
- 12 And they mooued the people and the Elders and the Scribes. And inuading him, they tooke him, and brought him into the Councell,
- 13 And they brought forth false witnesses which said, This man ceaseth not to speake blasphemous words, against this holy place and the Law.
- 14 For wee haue hearde him say, that this Iesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall chaunge the ordinances which Moses hath giuen vs.
- 15 And when all which sate in the Councell had beholden him, they saw his face as it had bene the face of an Angell.

12 Being ouercome with the power of the Spirite, they giue ouer disputing, but they prepare false witnesses, that with false and slaunderous reports they may oppresse him. Whereby it appeareth that they did striue with an euill conscience. For what can bee more vnmeet than in their cause to leane vnto lies? Admit hee were a wicked man, and guiltie, yet hee must not haue false witness borne against him. But hypocrites which shrowde themselues vnder zeale, doe careleslie graunt themselues leaue to doe that. Wee see how the Papistes at this day corrupt manifest places of Scripture, and that wittingly, whiles that they will falsely wrest testimonies against vs. I confesse in deede that they offend for the most part through ignorance. Yet can we finde none of them which doeth not graunt himselfe libertie to corrupt both the sense and also the wordes of the Scripture, that they may bring our doctrine into contempt: yea they slaunder vs monstrously euen in the Pulpit. If you aske these Rabbines, Whether it bee lawfull to slaunder a man or no: they will denie that it is lawfull generally: but when they come vnto vs, good zeale doth excuse them, because they thinke that nothing is vnlawfull, which may burthen vs or our cause. Therefore they flatter themselues in lying, falsehoode and dogged impudencie. Such hypocrisie did also blinde them of whom Luke speaketh in this place, which vsed false witness to put Stephen to death. For when Sathan reigneth, hee doeth not onely pricke forward the reprobate vnto crueltie, but also blinde their eyes, so that they thinke that they may doe whatsoever they will. We are especially taught by this example, how daungerous the colour of good zeale is, vnlesse it be gouerned by the Spirit of God: for it breaketh out alwayes into furious madnesse and in the meane season it is a maruiculous visure to couer all manner of wickednesse.

14 Wee haue heard. It shall full well appeare by Stephens defense, that hee neuer spake any thing touching Moses or the Temple without reuerence. And yet notwithstanding this was not laide to his charge for nothing. For hee had taught the abrogating of the Lawe. But they are false witnesses in this, and suborned to lie, because they corrupt purposely those thinges which were well and godlielie spoken. So Christ was enforced to cleare himselfe, that hee came not to destroy the Lawe, but to fulfill the Lawe, because when hee had preached

ched of abrogating the Ceremonies, the wicked wrested this vnto an other purpose, as if he meant to abolish and take away the whole Lawe. Furthermore they wrested that wickedlie vnto the Temple of Ierusalem, which hee spake of his bodie. What? was it not objected to Paule that hee taught That euil is to bee done, that good may come thereof? Therefore there is no cause why wee shoulde woonder at this day that that is so falsely misconstrued which wee teach godlily, well and profitablie. Yea wee must rather perswade our selues thus, that the doctrine of the Gospel can neuer be handled so warilie and moderately, but that it shall be subiect to false accusations. For Sathan, who is the father of lying, doeth alwayes bestirre himselfe in his office. Againe, because there be manie things which are contrarie to the reason of the flesh, men are enclined to nothing more, than to admit false reportes, which corrupt the true and syncere sense of doctrine. This malice of Sathan, and the sleights ought to make vs more warie, and more circumspect, that no preposterous thing, or any thing that is vnproperly spoken escape vs, wherewith they may be armed to fight against vs. For we must carefullie cut off from the wicked that occasion whereat they snatch. And if wee see that doctrine which is by vs well and godlily deliuered, corrupted, deformed and torne in peeces with false reportes, wee must not repent that we haue begunne, neither yet is there any cause why we shoulde be more slacke hereafter. For it is not meete that wee should be free from the poysoned and venomous bytings of Sathan: which the son of God himselfe coulde not escape. In the meane season it is our parte and duetie to dash and put away those lies wherewith the truth of God is burdened: like as we see Christ free the doctrine of the Gospel from yniust infamie. Onely let vs so prepare our selues that such indignitie and vn honest dealing may not hinder vs in our course. Because wee teach that men are so corrupt, that they are altogether slaues vnto sinne and wicked lustes: the enemies doe thereupon inferre this false accusation, that wee denie that men sinne willingly, but that they are enforced thereunto by some other meanes, so that they are not in the faulte, neither beare any blame: yea they say farther that we quench altogether all desire to doe well. Because wee denie that the workes of holy men are for their owne worthinesse meritorious, because they haue alwayes some faulte or imperfection in them, they cauill that wee put no difference betweene the good and the euill. Because wee say that mans righteousness consisteth in the grace of God alone, and that godly soules can finde rest no where else, saue onely in the death of Christ: they object that by this meanes wee graunt libertie to the flesh to doe what so euer it will, that the vse of the lawe may no longer remaine. When as wee maintaine the honour of Christ, which they bestowe as it pleaseth them heere and there, after that they haue rent it in a thousande peeces like a pray, they feigne that wee are enemies to the Saintes. They falsely report that wee seek the licentiousnesse of the flesh in steede of the libertie of the spirit. Whiles that wee inde-

uour to restore the supper of the Lorde vnto his pure and lawfull vse, they crie out impudently that wee ouerthrowe and destroy the same. Others also which take away all thinges as did the Academikes, because that doth not please them which we teach, concerning the secret predestination of God, and that out of the scriptures lay to our charge despitefullie, that wee make God a tyrant, which taketh pleasure in putting innocent men to death, seeing that hee hath already adiudged those vnto eternall death, which are as yet vnborne: and other such thinges can bee saide on this behalfe: whereas notwithstanding they are sufficientlie conuict that wee thinke reuerently of God, and that wee speake no otherwise than hee teacheth with his owne mouth. It is an harde matter to endure such enuie, yet must wee not therefore cease of to defende a good cause. For the trueth of God is precious in his sight, and it ought also to bee precious vnto vs: although it bee vnto the reprobate the sauour of death vnto death. But nowe I returne vnto Stephen his accusation, the principall pointe whereof is this, that hee blasphemed God and Moses. They doe for good considerations make the iniurie common to God and to Moses: because Moses had nothing in his doctrine, which was his owne or separated from God. They proue this: because hee spake blasphemously against the temple and the Lawe. Furthermore they make this the blasphemie, because hee saide that the comming of Christ had made an ende of the Temple and the Ceremonies. It is not credible that Stephen spake thus as they report: but they maliciously wrest those thinges which were spoken well and godlily, that they may colour their false accusation. But although they had chaunged nothing in the wordes, yet Stephen was so farre from doing anie iniurie to the Lawe and the Temple, that hee coulde no way better and more truly praise the same. The Iewes did suppose that the Temple was quite dishonoured, vnlesse the shadowish estate thereof shoulde endure for euer: that the Lawe of Moses was frustrate and nothing woorth, vnlesse the Ceremonies shoulde bee continuallie in force. But the excellencie of the Temple and the profite of the Ceremonies consist rather in this, whiles that they are referred vnto Christ, as vnto their principall patterne. Therefore howsoeuer the accusation hath some colour, yet is it vniust and wicked. And although the fact come in question, that is, whether the matter bee so as the aduersaries lay to his charge, notwithstanding the state is properlie of qualitie. For they accuse Stephen, because hee taught that the forme of the worshippe of God which was then vsed, should bee chaunged: and they interpret this to bee blasphemie against God and Moses. Therefore the controuersie is rather concerning right (as they say) than the fact it selfe. For the question is, Whether he be iniurious and wicked against God and Moses, who saith that the visible Temple is an image of a more excellent sanctuarie, wherein dwelleth the fulnesse of the Godhead, and who teacheth that the shadowes of the Law are temporall.

2. Cor. 2. 16.

This Iesus of Nazareth. They speake thus of Christ disdainfully, as if the remembrance of him were detestable. Neuertheless it may be gathered out of their accusations, that Stephen did in the abrogating of the Lawe, set the bodie against the shadowes, and the substance against the figures. For if Ceremonies bee abolished by Christ, their trueth is spirituall. The Iewes which would haue them continue for euer, did consider nothing in them but that which was grosse, carnall, earthlie, and which might be seene with the eies. Briefly, if the vse of Ceremonies were continual, they should bee fraile and shoulde vanish away, because they should haue nothing but the only external shew: so that they shoulde haue no soundnes. Therefore this is their true perpetuie when as they are abrogated by the comming of Christ: because it followeth here vpon, that the force and effect thereof doth consist in Christ.

Shall chaunge the ordinances. It is out of all doubt that Stephen meant this of the ceremoniall part onely: but because men are wont to be more addicted to externall pompe, these men vnderstande that which was spoken, as if Stephen would bring the whole lawe to nothing. The principall precepts of the Lawe did in deede concerne the spirituall worship of God, faith, iustice, and iudgement: but because these men make more account of the external rites, they call the rites which are commaunded concerning the sacrifices, *ordinances* of Moses, by excellencie. This was bredde by the bone from the beginning of the worlde, and it will neuer out of the flesh so long as it lasteth. As at this day the Papistes acknowledge no worship of God saue onely in their visures. Although they differ much from the Iewes, because they follow nothing but the friuolous inuentions of men, for the ordinances of God.

And when they had beheld. Men doe commonly in places of iudgement turne their eies towards the partie arraigned, when as they looke for his defense. Hee saith that Stephen appeared like to an Angel. This is not spoken of his natural face, but rather of his present countenance. For whereas the countenance of those which are arraigned vseth commonly to be pale, whereas they stammer in their speach, and shew other signes of feare, Luke teacheth that there was no such thing in Stephen: but that there appeared rather in him a certaine maiestie. For the scripture vseth sometimes to borrow a similitude of Angels in this sense, as

1. Sam. 24. 9. 1. Sam. 24. & 2. 14. & 19.

2. Sam. 14. 17

2. Sam. 19. 27

CHAP. VII.

- 1 **A**nd the chiefe Priest said, Are these things so?
- 2 He answered, Men, brethren and fathers, harken, The God of glorie appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan.
- 3 And he said vnto him, Come out of my countrie, and from amongst thy Kynred, and come into the land which I will shew thee.
- 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldees, & dwelt in Charan. After that his father was dead, God brought him thence into this lande, wherein yee now dwell.

1 There appeareth as yet some colour of equitie in the highest priest and in the councell: and yet notwithstanding there is a most vniust preiudice in his wordes. For he asketh him not what cause he had to teach thus, neither doth he admit him vnto the defence of right (which was notwithstanding the chief:) but he demandeth precisely whether Steeuen vttered these wordes whatsoeuer they were: as the Papistes at this day will not demaund what doctrine it is, and whether it can be proued out of the Scriptures: but they enquire whether any man durst mutter against their superstitions, that so soon as he is couñt, they may forthwith burne him. Furthermore, Steeuens answer may seeme at the first blush absurd and foolish. He beginneth first at the very first beginning: afterward he maketh a long narration, wherein there is no mention made in a maner of the matter in hande. And there can be no greater fault than to vtter many wordes, which are nothing appertinent vnto the matter. But whosoever shall thoroughly consider this long speech, hee shall finde nothing therein which is superfluous: and shall full well perceiue that Steeuen speaketh very appertinently, as the matter requireth. He was accused as an Apostata or reuolt, which did attempt the ouerthrow of religion and the worship of God. Therefore he beatech in this diligently, that he reteineth that God which the fathers haue alwayes worshipped: So that he turneth away the crime of wicked backsliding: and declareth that his enemies were pricked forward with nothing lesse than with the zeale of the law. For they bare a shew that they were wholly determined to encrease the glory of God: Therefore he wringeth from them this false boasting. And because they had the fathers alwaies in their mouths because they were puffed vp with the glorie of their nation: Steeuen declareth also, that they haue no cause to be proud of this: but rather, that the corruption of the fathers was so great & so manie, that they ought to be ashamed and humbled. As concerning the principall state of the cause, because the question was concerning the temple and the ceremonies, he affirmeth plainly, that their fathers were elected of God to bee a peculiar people before there was any temple, and before Moses was born. And to this end tendeth that *exordium* or beginning which is so far set. Secondly he telleth them that all externall rites which God gaue by the hand of Moses, were fashioned according to the heavenly paterne. Whereupon it followeth, that the ceremoniall law is referred vnto another ende, and that those deale foolishly and disorderedly who omit the truth and stay only in the signes. If the readers shal referre the whole oration of Steeuen vnto these pointes, they shall finde nothing therein which agreeth not very well with the cause: as I shal declare again briefly in the end. Neuertheles that scope of the whole oration shal not hinder, but that we may discusse all things briefly, which are worth the noting.

2 *Men, brethren, and fathers.* Although Steeuen saw that those which sate in the councell were for the most part the sworn enemies of Christ, yet because the ordinarie gouernment of the people did belong to the, and they had the ouersight of the church, which God had not as yet cast
of

of, therefore hee is not afraid for modesties sake to call them fathers. Neither doth he flatteringly purchase fauour hereby. But he giueth this honour to the order and gouernment appointed by god, vntill such time as the authoritie shuld be taken from them, the order being altered. Neuerthelesse the reuerence of the place which they had, doth not hinder him nor stoppe his mouth, but that hee doeth freely dissent from them. Whereby it appeareth how ridiculous the papists are, who wil haue vs so tyed vnto bare & vain inuented titles, that they may enforce vs to subscribe vnto their decrees though they be neuer so wicked.

The God of glory. By this beginning he declareth that hee doth not disagree or dissent from the fathers in true religion which they folowed. For all religion, the worshippe of God, the doctrine of the lawe, all prophetes did depend vpon that covenant, which God made with Abraham. Therefore when Steeuens confessed that God appeared to Abraham, he embraceth the law and the prophets, which flowe from that first reuelation as from a fountaine. Moreouer he calleth him the *god of glory*, that he may distinguish him from the false and feigned Gods, who alone is worthie of glory.

When he was in Mesopotamia. It is well knowen that that region is called by this name, which lyeth betweene the riuer *Tygris* and *Euphrates*. And he saith before, he dwelt in Charran: because Abraham being warned by an oracle, fledde from Chaldea to Charran, which is a Citie of Mesopotamia, famous by reason of the slaughter of Crassus and the Roman armie: althogh Plinie saith that it was a citie of Arabia. And it is no maruell that Chaldea is in this place comprehended vnder the name of Mesopotamia: because although that region which is enclosed with *Tygris* and *Euphrates*, be properly "the countrie between two riuers. Yet those which set down any description of countries, do call both Assyria & Chaldea by this name. The summe is this, that Abraham being commanded by God, did forsake his countrie: and so he was preuented with the meergoodnes of god, when as he sought that which was offered him at home of the owne accord. Read the last chapter of Iosua. But it seemeth that Moses his narration doth somewhat disagree with this. For after that about the end of the 11. chap. of Genesis he had declared, that Abraham doth goe into another countrie to dwell, hauing left his house, he addeth in the beginning of the twelf, that god spake vnto Abraham. This is easily answered. For Moses reciteth not in this latter place what hapned after the departure of Abraham: but least any man should thinke that Abraham wandered into other countries hauing vnadvisedly forsaken his owne house (as light and vndiscrete men vse to doe sometimes) hee sheweth the cause of his departure, to wit, because he was commaunded by God to flit into another place. And thus much do the words of the Oracle import. For if hee had beene a straunger in an other countrie, God could not haue commaunded him to depart out of his natie soyle, forsaking his kinsmen and fathers house. Therefore wee see that this place agreeth wondrous well with the wordes of Moses. For after that Moses hath saide that Abraham went to Charran to the end he may shew that this journey was taken in hande not through any lightnes of man,

Or Mesopotamia.

but at the commaundement of god, he addeth that afterward, which he had before omitted, which maner of speaking is much vsed of the Hebr.

3 *Come out of thy countrie.* God vseth many wordes, to the end hee may the more wound the mind of Abrahā, as if it were not a thing sharpe enough of it self to be banished out of his own countrie. And that serued to trie his faith: euen as that other thing also, that god assigneth him no land wherein he may dwel, but maketh him stande in doubt & waite for a time. Wherefore the obedience of Abrahā was so much the more to be commended, because the sweetnes of his natiue soyle keepeth him not back frō going willingly as it were into exile: & in that hee doubteth not to folow God, although there appear no certain resting place, but is commanded to wander to & fro for a time. Whereas the shewing of the land is deferred, it differeth not much frō deceiuing of him. Furthermore we learne continually by our owne experience, how profitable it was for Abraham thus to be exercised & as it were trained by little & little. Manie men are carried with a godly affection to attempt great things. but by & by so soone as their heat is waxen cold, it repenteth the of their purpose, & they would gladly slip their necks out of the collar. Therefore least Abraham shuld faint when he was in the midst of his course, through the remembrance of those things which he had left behind him, god sitteth & trieth his mind throughly, immediatly after he had begun, least he take any thing in hand lightly, & vnadvisedly. To this purpose serueth the parable, which Christ setteth before vs concerning the building of the tower. For he teacheth that we must first cast the charges, least with shame we be enforced to leaue off building after we haue begun. And though this were a particular thing in Abrahā, in that he was cōmanded to goe out of his own countrie, & to go into a far countrie: in that God carried him frō place to place, yet notwithstanding there is in these words some figure of the calling of vs all. We are not al simply cōmaunded to forsake our countrie, but we are commanded to denie our selues: we are not cōmanded to come out of our fathers house, but to bid a due to our owne will, & to the desires of our own flesh. Againe, if father and mother, wife & children hinder vs frō following God, we must forsake them all. The cōmandement is giuen simply to Abrahā to sit: but we are commanded to doe the same vpon condicion. For if in any place we cannot serue god, we must rather make choise of exile, than to stay in our nest being slothful & sluggish. Therefore let vs haue the example of Abrahā alwayes before our eyes. He is the father of the faithfull, he was tried all manner of wayes: doth he forget his countrie, his friends, and himself, that he may giue ouer himself vnto God? If we will be counted the children of God, we must not degenerate from him.

Luk. 14. 28.

Ro. 4. 16. 17.

Which I shall shew thee. We must note that which I touched a little before, that Abrahā is kept in dout, to the end his patience may be tried. And this must we also apply to our own vse, that we may learn to depend wholly vpon god. And surely this is a principal exercise of our faith, to put our trust in God, euen when we see nothing. God in deed will oftentimes shewe vs a lande wherein hee graunteth vs an abiding place:

Colos. 3. 3.

yet notwithstanding because we are strangers in the world, wee haue no certaine and continuall place of aboade any where. Again, our life, as Paule saith, is hidde: and being like vnto dead men, wee hope for saluation which is hid in heauen. Therefore as touching our perpetuall habitation, God doth cause vs to depend vpon his prouidence alone when he commaundeth vs as it were to wander in a strange countrie. Least suche deferring discourage vs, wee must holde this general rule of faith: that we must go whither god calleth vs, howsoeuer he do not shew that which he promisseth.

4 *Then going out.* The readinesse and willingnesse of faith is commended in these wordes. For when he is called, he maketh no delay, but maketh hast and subdueth all his affections, that they may obey the holy commaundement of God. It is vncertaine for what cause hee staid at Charran: yet it may be that the weaknes of his father caused him to tarrise there, who as we read, died there shortly after: or els because he durst goe no further vntill such time as the Lord hadde told him whither hee should goe. It is more like to be true in mine opinion, that he was staid there a while with the wearisomnesse and sicknesse of his father, because Steeuens saith plainly, that he was brought thence after the death of his father.

5 *And he gaue him none inheritance in it, no nor the breadth of a foot: and promised that he would giue it him to possesse, and to his seed after him, when as he had no sonne.*

6 *And God spake after this manner: Thy seed shall sojourn in a strange land, and they shall bring it into bondage: and shall euill intreat it fortie yeres.*

7 *But the nation whom they shall serue, will I iudge, said God. And afterwarde they shall come out, and shal worship me in this place.*

8 *And he gaue him the covenant of circumcision; and so hee begate Isaach, and circumcised him the eight day. And Isaach begate Iacob, and Iacob begate the twelue patriarches.*

5 Wee must note three things in this place: that GOD exercised the patience of his seruant, because after that hee had brought him out of his owne countrie, he dwelt in the land of Chanaan as a stranger. For Abraham possessed not one footes breadth, saue onely that which hee bought to burie in. And that is counted no possession which serueth not for the vses of this life. Secodly forasmuch as that field was bought, Steuens doth for good causes say, that God gaue Abraham nothing. For that could not be gotten either with money, or by any other meanes which man could inuent, which Abraham did hope for of the promise. Secondlie we must note, that though God did not shew Abraham the thing it selfe as yet, yet did he vpholde him by his worde. And this is our stay, when God promisseth that that is laid vp for vs, which as yet wee possesse not. Therefore when as the thing, that is the possession of the land was wanting, Abraham had for his help and stay the promise of God: and being content with the same alone, hee desired nothing in the land of Chanaan

an saue only an vncerteine resting place wherein he might sojourne. For as much as *epaggelēsthai* signifieth simplie to promise. I thought there was no cause, why with Erasmus I should translate it in this place, to *promise againe*. For I resolute it aduersatiuely. Althogh he had promised, that by the way we may note as it were a shew of deceiuing, vnlesse peraduenture some man be disposed to apply it vnto the promises which are oftentimes repeated. Thirdly we must note that the promise was such that it did not much differ from a meere mocke. God promised the land to the seed of Abraham when he was fourescore yeres old, and had to wife one that was barrē, neither had he any hope to haue any issue. This seemeth to be more thā friuolous. For why doeth he not rather promise that hee will giue him seed? but this was a notable trial of faith, in that Abraham without asking any question, or any curious disputation, did obediently and meekly imbrace that which he had hard proceed out of the mouth of the Lord. Therefore let vs remember that God doeth so lift vppe and comfort his seruant with his worde, that he doth not onely deferre the giuing of the thing, but also he may seeme after a sort to mock him: as he dealeth with vs also in some respect. For although he cal vs the heires of the worlde, hee suffereth vs oftentimes to want euen a competent liuing and necessarie helpes. And this doth he offer purpose, that he may bring the wisdom of the flesh to nought, seeing that we doe not otherwise giue due honour to his word. Iam. 2. 5.

Thy seed shall be a stranger. Steuen putteth the Iewes in mind in how miserable and reprochfull an estate their fathers were in Egypt: and sheweth that this their seruitude, wherwith they were oppressed came not by chaunce: because it was fortolde long before by the oracle of God. This historie ought to haue bin of great force, partly to tame their lostie courages, and to teach them modestie, partly to set forth the grace of God: because God had alwayes had a care of that nation. For this is a singular benefite in that the people are restored wonderfully as it were from death to life. In the meane season the Iewes are taught that the church of God was elsewhere, than in the land wherein they dwelt: that the fathers were chosen to be a peculiar people, and that they were kept safe vnder the tuition of God, before euer the temple was built: or the externall ceremonies of the law were instituted. These things appertain vnto the generall scope or drift of the sermon. But hence may wee gather a profitable admonition. Bondage is of it selfe hard and bitter: but when crueltie of masters is added thereunto, it seemeth to be intollerable.

Wherefore it must needs be that the minde of the godly man was sore wounded, when he heard that his seed should serue and bee villanouslie and cruelly intreated. Moreouer this was no small tryall: forasmuch as these things were, to looke to, contrarie, the enheritance of the lande of Chanaan which was nowe promised, and bondage in a strange countrie. For who woulde not haue thought, that god had as it were forgotten his former promise, when as he telleth Abraham that his seed shall endure miserable bondage? He saith at the first that he wil giue his seed the lande. But he had as yet no seed: yea all hope of seed was nowe cut off.

off. But when doth he promise that he will giue it? After his death. By & by he saith, that that seed should be carried away to another place, that it may serue strangers. And how long? Foure hundred yeeres. Doth hee not seeme by this meanes to pul back his hand, that he may not perform that which he had promised? Let vs know that this was done (not once only) for god dealeth oftentimes with vs thus, so that he may seem contrarie to himselfe: and he speaketh also in such sort as that he may seem to call back that which he had promised. Therefore it cannot be but that flesh will iudge that he is contrarie to himselfe, but faith doth know that his words do agree wel together amongst themselues, & with his works. And this is the purpose of God, to the end hee may extend the sight of our faith the farther, to shew his promises a far of, as it were a long place being put between. Therefore it is our dutie to goe toward & to stue to attaine vnto that saluation which is set before vs through many straits, through diuers lets, through long distance, through the midst of deeps, and finally, through death it selfe. Furthermore seeing that wee see that the people which God had chosen, did serue the Egyptians, and was vn-courteously afflicted, we must not bee discouraged, if the like condition be prepared for vs at this day. For it is no new thing, neither any vnwōted thing, for the church of God to lie oppressed vnder tyrannie, and to be as it were troden vnder foot of the wicked.

7 *The nation whom they shall serue.* This iudgement is ioyned with the deliuerance of the people. For whereas God doth punish the crueltie and tyrannie of the wicked Egyptians, he doeth that for his peoples sake, whom he tooke into his tuition, that it may be seene that he is the deliuerer of his church. Therefore so often as wee are vniustly afflicted by the wicked, let vs remember that God is the iudge of the world, who wil let no iniuries be vnpunished: let euery mā thus think with himself, Seing that I am vnder the tuition of God, who is the iudge of the world, and to whom it belongeth to punish all iniuries; those shall not escape his hand who trouble me now. There is the like place in Deut. 32. Where god saith, that vengeance is his. Whēce Paul gathereth that we must giue place to wrath: as if he should say, that this ought to serue to reform impatience, & to bridle our euil affectiōs, in that god promisseth that he wil reuenge. For he which reuengeth himselfe, doth take Gods office from him. And let vs still remember that which I haue alreadie said, that God is touched with an especial care to reuenge iniuries done to his childre, as it is in the Psalme, Hurt not mine annointed, and be not trouble some to my prophetes.

Deu. 32. 43.
Rom. 12. 19

They shall come thence and serue me. Therefore their deliuerance went before the temple, & the worship of the law. Whereupon it foloweth, that the grace of God was not tyed to ceremonies. Neuerthelesse Steeuen noteth the end of their deliuerance, that god chose both a peculiar people, & a peculiar place for the true worship of his name. Whence we gather again, that we must regard what he commandeth & alloweth. Other nations also were determined to worship God, but because their rites were corrupt and bastardy, God doth separate the Iewes from the rest,

rest, and assigneth them a place, where he wil haue them to worship him sincerely & duly as they ought. This place teacheth vs, that Gods benefites must be referred to this end, that men might be brought to addresse & giue ouer themselues wholly to him. Now since that god hath disappeared the treasures of his grace throughout the whole world: wee must endeavour to sanctifie him, by worshipping him purely and holily, in what countrie soeuer we dwell.

8 *He gaue him the couenant.* When as he confesseth that circumcision is the couenant of God, hee cleereth himselfe sufficiently of that crime which was laid to his charge: but in the mean season he sheweth that the Iewes deale amisse, if they place the beginning of their saluation in the externall signe. For if Abraham was called, & the lande, & redemption promised to his seed before such time as hee was circumcised, it appeareth that the glory of the whole stock doth not depend vpon circumcision. Paul vseth the same argument in the 4. chap. to the Romans. For seeing that Abraham obtained righteousness & pleased God before he was circumcised, hee gathereth thence that circumcision is not the cause of righteousness. Therefore we see that Steeuen frameth no vain and idle narration: because this was very much appertinent vnto the cause, that the Iewes might remember how God had adopted them with their Fathers, & it is to be thought that Steuen did plainly expresse both things: that although circumcision was giuen by God, that it might be a signe of grace, yet was the adoptiō before it, both in order & in time. But we haue no neede to dispute any longer in this place concerning the nature and force of circūcisiō, only let vs note this, that god doth first promise those things to Abraham which he confirmeth afterward by circūcisiō: that we may knowe that the signes are vain & nothing worth, vnles the word go before. Let vs also note that there is a profitable doctrine contained in the word *couenant*: to wit, that god maketh his couenant with vs in the Sacraments, that he may declare his loue toward vs: which thing if it be true, first they are not only workes of externall profession amongst men: but they gaue great force inwardly before god to confirme the faith. Secondly they are no vaine figures: because God who is true, figureth nothing there which he doth not perforce.

9 *And the Patriarks moued with enuie, sold Ioseph into Egypt. Notwithstanding God was with him.*

10 *And he deliuered him out of all his afflictions: & he gaue him fauor & wisdom in the sight of Pharao king of Egypt, who made him ruler ouer Egypt, & ouer all his house.*

11 *And there came a famine vpon all the land of Egypt & Chanaan, and great affliction: neither did our fathers find food.*

12 *And when Iacob had hard, that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers thither first.*

13 *And at the second comming Ioseph was known of his brethren. And the kindred of Ioseph was made known to Pharao.*

14 *The Ioseph sent, & called out his father Iacob, & al his kindred, lxxv. soules.*

15 *And Iacob went down into Egypt, and he died and our fathers.*

16 And they were caried into Sichem, & they were laid in the Sepulchre, which Abraham had bought for money of the sonnes Hemor, the sonne of Sichem.

9 Now followeth the greatest wickednesse of the nation of Israel: that they conspired together to oppresse their innocent brother: which crueltie is contrarie to nature. Neither coulde the Iewes obiekt that it was a priuate fault of a few: for the infamie reacheth vnto all the people. For as much as all the patriarkes, Benjamin except, had polluted themselves with that treacherie. Therefore in that Steeuens vouchsafeth to giue them an honourable name, that redoundeth to the greater reproch of the nation. They boasted proudly of their fathers, hee sheweth what maner persons the chief of them were: to wit, murtherers of their brother, so much as in them laid. For besides that slauerie was a kinde of death, we know what they went about at the first, & secondly what cruel punishments Ioseph suffred of al which his brethren were gilty. Hereby it appeareth that God was bountifull and mercifull to those, which were as it were vnwilling, & which did resist him. For him (who was about to be the authour of health & help) would they haue destroyed. Wherefore they did what they could to renounce all the benefites of God. So he wil declare afterward that Moses was reiected, when he was offered of God to be a redeemer. Therefore the Iewes haue smal cause to brag of the excellencie of their kintred: but this alone remaineth for them, that beeing ashamed, they cōfesse that whosoever they are they haue the same thorrow the meere mercie of God, and that they consider that the lawe was giuen to set forth the same.

Psal. 105. 18

God was with him. God was not so with him, that hee did alwaies shewe forth his power in helping him. For that is no smal thing which is saide in the Psalm, That the yron went through his soule. Surely it must needs be that he was in great heauines, when being destitute of all help, he suffered reproch also together with bands & the punishment of an vngodly and wicked man: but God vseth oftentimes to bee present with his in such sort, that he lyeth hid for a time. And the end was an euident tokē of his presence, which Ioseph saw not at the first. Furthermore we ought to remēber this euet now & then, that Ioseph was not deliuered because he had called vpon God in the temple, but a farre off in Egypt.

10 Steeuens addeth the meanes, because God gaue him fauour in the sight of Pharaο. God could haue deliuered him by some other meanes, but his counsell had respect vnto a farther thing, that Ioseph being ruler of the kingdom, might entertain his father & al his familie. In these two wordes *faueur & wisdom*, there is the figure Hipallage. For the wisdom wherewith Ioseph was endued, was the cause that he founde fauour. Although I confesse that they were two distinct benefites. For though Ioseph were a faithfull interpreter of dreames, and did excell in diuine wisdom, yet the proud tyrant woulde neuer haue brought him to so great honour, vnlesse God had bent the minde of Pharaο vnto a certaine vnwonted loue: yet notwithstanding we must consider that order, whereby God vseth to bring him into fauour. *Wisdom* doeth not only signifie the gift

gift of prophesie in interpreting dreames; but prudence in giuing counsell: for Moses putteth in both. That which Steeuen reporteth of one man in this place, is extended vnto all. For what aptnes and readinesse focuer is in men, it ought to be reckoned amongst the giftes of God, and that his speciall giftes. And it is he that giueth good successe as it pleaseth him, that his gifts may be profitable to that end for which it seemed good to him to giue them. Therefore although Ioseph bee made chiefe ruler of Egypt by Pharaon, yet is he listed vp to so great honour properly by the hand of God.

11 *There came a famine.* Hereby it appeareth that the deliuerance of Ioseph was such a benefite as was common to al the familie of Iacob. For seeing the famin drew on, Ioseph was sent before in due time, to prouide sustenance to feed the hungrie: as he himselfe doth acknowledge the wonderfull counsell of God in that point. Neuerthelesse the free goodnesse of God appeareth plainly in the person of Ioseph, whiles that he is appointed to nourish and feed his brethren, who had sold him, and by that meanes sent him far away; and thought that hee was gone away quite out of the world: he putteth meat in their mouthes, who had thrown him into a pit, and had depriued him of the aire and the common breäch. Finally, hee nourisheth & preferueth their life, who were not afraid to take from him his life. In the mean season Steeuen putteth the Iewes in mind of this, that the patriarks were enforced to depart out of that land, which was giuen them for an heritage, and that they died in another place. Therefore forasmuch as they were sojourners in it, they are at length banished out of the same.

14. Whereas he saith that Iacob came into Egypt with seuentie fife soules, it agreeth not with the words of Moses. For Moses maketh mention of seuentie only. Hierome thinketh that Luke setteth not downe word for word those things which Steeuen had spoken, or that he tooke this number out of the Greek translation of Moses: either because hee himselfe being a Prosylite had not the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue: or because he would graunt the Gentiles this, who vsed to read it thus. Furthermore it is vncertaine whether the Greek interpreters set down this nuber of set purpose, or whether it crope in afterward through negligence. Which (I mean the latter) might well be, forasmuch as the Grecians vse to set down their numbers in letters. August. in his 26. booke of citie of God, thinketh that Iosephs nephewes & kinsmen are cõprehended in this number: & so he thinketh that the word *went down*, doth signifie all that timewhich Iacob liued. But that cõiecture can by no means be receiued. For in the meane space the other patriarks also had many children born to them. This seemeth to mee a thing like to be true, that the seuentie interpreters did translate that truly which was in Moses. And we cannot say that they were deceiued: forasmuch as Deu. 10. wher this nuber is repeated, they agree with Moses, at least as that place was read without all dout in the time of Hierome. For those coppies which are printed at this day, haue it otherwise. Therefore I think that this difference came through the error of the writers whiche wrote out the

Gen-46.27

bookes. And it was a matter of no such weight, for which Luke ought to haue troubled the Gentiles which were accustomed with the Greek reading. And it may be that he himself did put down the true number: & that some man did correct the same amisse out of that place of Moses. For we know that those which had the new testament in hand, were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue, yet skilfull in the Greek. Therefore to the end the wordes of Steeuen might agree with the place of Moses, it is to be thought that that false number which was found in the Greeke translation of Genesis was by them put in also in this place: concerning which if any man contend more stubbornly, let vs suffer him to bee wise without measure. Let vs reméber that it is not without cause that Paule doth forbid vs to be too curious about genealogies. This so smal a nūber is purposely expressed, to the end the power of god may the more plainlie appear, in so great an enlarging of that kindred, which was of no long continuāce. For such a small handfull of men could not by any humane manner of engendering grow to such an infinit multitude as is recorded in Exodus, within 250. yeres. We ought rather to weigh the myracle which the Spirit comédeth vnto vs in this place, than to stand long about one letter, wherby the number is altered. There arise other questions, (and those which are more hard to be answered) out of the rest of the text.

Exo. 12. 37.

Gen. 50. 13.

Ios. 24. 32.

16 Steeué saith, that the Patriarks were carried into the land of Chanaan, after they wer dead. But Moses maketh mentiō only of the bones of Ioseph. And Iosua 24. it is reported, that the bones of Ioseph were buried without making any mention of the rest. Some answer that Moses speaketh of Ioseph for honors sake, bicause he had giuen expresse cōmandement concerning his bones: which we cannot read to haue bin done of the rest. And surely when Ierome in the pilgrimage of *Paula*, saith, that she came by Sichem, he saith that she saw there the sepulchres of the 12. Patriarks: but in another place he maketh mentiō of Iosephs graue only. And it may be that there were emptie tombes erected to the rest. I cā affirme nothing concerning this matter for a cerraantie, saue onely that this is either a speech wherein is Synecdoche: or els that Luke rehearseth this not so much out of Moses, as according to the old fame: as the Iewes had many things in times past from the fathers, which were deliuered as it were from hand to hand. And whereas hee saith afterwarde they were laid in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought of the sons of Hemor, it is manifest that there is a fault in the worde *Abraham*. For Abraham had bought a double caue of Ephron the Hittite to burie his wife Sara in: but Ioseph was buried in another place, to wit, in the field which his father Iacob hadde bought of the sonnes of Hemor, for an hundred lambes. Wherefore this place must be amended.

Gen. 23. 9.

17 And when the time of the promise drew neere, which God had sworne to Abraham the people increased, and was multiplied in Egypt.

18 Vntill another king arose which knew not Ioseph.

19 This man dealt subtilly with our kindred, he euill intreated our fathers, that they might cast out their infants, least they should be increased.

17 Stee

17 Steeuen passeth ouer vnto the deliuerance of the people, before which, went that innumerable issue, which had increased beyonde the ordinarie maner in no long space of time. Therfore he setteth down this as a singular gift of God: that the people was encreased, to the ende wee may know that that came not to passe according to the cōmon or wonted custome of nature. But on the other side god seemeth to take frō the Iewes al hope: because Pharaο doth tyrannously afflict thē, & their bondage groweth greater dailie. And when as they are commanded to cast out their male infants, it seemeth that the destruction of the whole nation was present. There is another token of deliuerance giuen, when Moses commeth abroad: but because he is by & by refused and enforced to flie into exile, there remaineth nothing but meer despair. The summe is this, that God being mindefull of his promise, did increase the people in time, that he might perform that which he had sworne to Abraham: but the Iewes (as they were vnthankful & froward) did refuse the grace of god, so that they did what they could to shut vp the way before themselves. Furthermore we must note the prouidence of God in this place, whiles that he doth so order the course of times, that his works haue alwaies their opportunite. But men who make hast disorderedly in their desires, cannot hope patiently & be at rest vntill such time as god sheweth forth his hand: for this cause, because they take no heed to that moderation wherof I haue spokē. And to the end god may exercise the faith of his children, so often as he appeareth with ioyfull tokens of grace, hee setteth other things against those on the other side, which cut off sodainly the hope of saluation. For who would not haue said of the Hebrewes, that they wer vtterly vndone, when as the kings cōmandement appointeth al the men children to be put to death? For which cause the meditating vpon that doctrine is the most necessarie for vs, that god doth kill & restore to life: he leadeth vnto hell and bringeth back againe.

19 *Deals subtiltie.* The old interpreter did not translate this amissie to *deceine*. For Steeuen meaneth that the king of Egypt did craftily inuent new shiftes, and wicked pretences, that he might euer now & then lay heauier burthens vpon the people: like as almost all tyrants doe: for how vniustly soeuer they vex their subiects, they are too wittie to inuent excuses. And it is not to be doubted but that Pharaο abused this honest colour, that it was not meet that the Iewes which were sojourners, should haue a place of abode in his realm for nought, & that they shuld be free frō all burthens, seing they did inioy great cōmodities. Therefore he deceitfully made thē vile bonslaues of free mē. Whē Steeuen saith that this tyrant knewe not Ioseph, heereby it appeareth howe soone the remembrance of benefits passeth away amongst men. For although wee doe all with one consent detest vnthankfulnesse, yet is there no vice more common amongst vs.

Least they should be encreased. Erasmus translateth this vnproperly, in my iudgement. For *Zoogoneisthai* exprestheth more than, Least their children should liue. For the worde is fet thence, because the people doth alwayes remaine alieue in the ofspring. And furthermore, Steeuen

doth not reckon vppē all the partes of their euill intreating; but putterh downe one example of extreeme crueltie. Whence we may easily gather how neere the whole seed of Abraham was to destruction. For Pharaο seemed to haue murdered them all with that commandement as with one stroke of a sword. But such violent barbarisme did the more set forth the vnlooked for, and incredible power of God: because when Pharaο hath by all means possible striuen against God, yet all is in vaine.

20 All that time was Moses borne, who was acceptable to God. And hee was brought vp three moneths in his fathers house.

21 And the daughter of Pharaο tooke him vp when he was cast out: and nourished him vp for her owne sonne.

22 And Moses was taught in all wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in word and deed.

23 And when the time of fortie yeeres was fulfilled, it came into his mind to goe visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And when he saw one of them suffer wrong, hee defended him, and reuenged him which had the wrong, hauing smitten the Egyptian,

25 And hee thought that his brethren would haue vnderstoode that God by his hand should giue them deliuerance, but they vnderstood not.

26 The next day he was seen as they stroue, and set them at one againe, saying: Sirs, yee are brethren: why hat ye one another?

27 And hee which did iniurie to his neighbor, thrust him away, saying: Who made thee a prince and a iudge ouer vs.

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesternight?

29 And Moses fled at this saying, and became a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sonnes.

20 It is not without cause that Steeuen noteth the circumstance of time. Moses was born at the very same time when the king had commanded that all the men children should bee cast out. Therefore it seemeth that the minister of deliuerance is dead before he is borne. But that time is most fit for God to worke in, when there is no hope or counsell to bee looked for at mans hands. And it appeareth also most plainly, how God doth make perfect his power in mans weaknes. Moses is kept three moneths, but at length his parents (that they may saue their own liues) are inforced to cast him out into the riuēr. Only they put him in a little cōfer, that he may not by & by perish. When as Pharaοes daughter taketh him vp, he escaped death in deed, yet so that he goeth into another nation being cut off from the kinred of Israel. Yea he was like to bee a most troublesome aduerfariē to his nation, vnlesse God had restrained his mind. It is 40 yeres before he sheweth any token of brotherly goodwill.

22 Whereas Luke reporteth that he was taught in all wisdom of the Egyptians, hee putteth that in his commendation as a point of excellēcie. Notwithstanding it might haue so falne out, as it doth oftentimes, that beeing puffed vp with profane sciences, hee might haue despised the base commō people: yet because god hath determined to redeem his people,

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he doth in the meane season frame both the minde of Moses & al other things to finish his worke. The reason of mans fleshe should murmur in this place, Why doth God winke at so long miseries of the people? Why doth hee suffer Pharaon to rage more cruelly daily? Why doeth he not suffer Moses to growe vp amongst his owne people? Why doth hee after a sort cut him off frō the kinred of Israel, being adopted by the kings daughter? Why will he suffer him to remaine amidst courtly pleasures, and doth not rather pull him thence? But the end it selfe is to wonderfull, that we are enforced to confesse, that all these things were gouerned by singular counsel and order, to set forth the glorie of God. Whereas I said that Luke speaketh in this place of the learning of the Egyptians for honours sake, I would not haue it so taken, as if there were in the same no corruption. Forasmuch as Astrologie doth cōsider the wonderful workemanship of God, not only in the placing of the starres, & in such excellent varietie, but also in their mouing, force, and secrete offices, it is a science both profitable & worthie of praise. The Egyptians bestowed great studie in this: but being not content with the simple order of nature, they wandered also in manie foolish speculations, as did the Chaldeans. It is vncertaine whether Moses were infected with these superstitions or no. Yet howsoeuer it be, we see how sincerely, & plainly he setteth that before vs to be considered in the frame of the world, which is appertinent vnto godlines. Surely this was excellent modesty in that he which could reason with learned and wittie men of the secretes of nature, doth not only omit higher subtilties, but doeth also discende vnto the common capacitie of euerie most simple man, and doeth in a common style set forth vnto men vnlearned, those thinges which they perceiue by experience. When Iustine bableth concerning Moses, hee maketh him a Magician, which with iugling and inchaunments made passage for the people through the redde sea. So that Satan did not only go about to burie the power of God, but also to blasphemie the same. But we know that Moses did not striue with the enchauners by Magike, but did that only which God had enioined him. Furthermore the Egyptians had mysticall diuinitie, wherewith they coloured their doting inuentions, and monstrous abominations, as if they wold proue that they went mad not without reason: as the Papists, whereas they delude and mocke men like stage players, in their masse and other foolish rites, yet they inuent mysteries, that they may perswade mé that there is nothing there but that which is diuine. The cōmon sort of Priests cannot climb so high: but those which amongst them wil be accounted more cunning, doe omit no rite, how foolish and childish soeuer it bee, affirming that there is some spirituall mysterie in euerie of them. There is extant concerning this matter a most foolish mingle mangle, which they call the Rationall of diuine offices. But forasmuch as Sacrificing Priests alone did vse such dotings amongst themselues, it is not to bee thought that Moses spent any time in these, whose bringing vp was princely: But that hee was taught in liberall artes.

Hee was mightie. This phrase doth expresse amongst the Hebrewes,

a double excellencie, when as he which doth excell in wit and learning, is also apt to attempt & bring to passe great and weightie matters. Steeuen his meaning is therefore, that Moses was furnished with rare giftes, so that they did all confesse that he was a singular man. But seeing he was in such estimation, the Israclits had the lesse hope that he should be the minister which should work their deliuerance.

23 *When the time was fulfilled.* Many gather by this that Moses was neuer estranged in mind fro his nation; but the words of Steeuen incline rather toward the contrarie: to wit, that the Spirit of God did at length awake his mind as it were out of sleep, that he might at length goe visite his brethren, whom he had long time neglected. It is to be thought that hee was not ignorant of what stocke he came, seeing he had some token thereof in his flesh, and seeing the rumor thereof was spread abroad in the court: because the kinges daughter could not adopt him to bee her sonne, without some suspicion of wickednesse, vnlesse his kinred had byn knowen: yet was it long before he was of such courage that hee durst make knowen the loue which he bare toward his kinred. And this serueth not a little to set foorth the glory of God, that Moses being ignorant of his calling, doth remaine a long time idle in the kings court: and is afterward called of the Lord contrary to the hope of all men and his owne also. Therefore this new care for his brethren, which came into his minde, proceeded from a newe and vnwonted motion of Gods Spirit.

24 *When he saw a certaine man.* Moses came not to this spectacle by chaunce, but forasmuch as God had appointed him to be the deliuerer of his people, he would haue him shew foorth this token, & as it were make this beginning. For Steeuen doth plainly expresse, that he did attempt nothing vnadvisedly: but did that which became him, that was appointed to bee a deliuerer of the people, knowing that hee was thereunto called. For vnlesse God had armed him and made him puissaunt, it had been a thing altogether vnlawfull for him to kill any man, how wicked soeuer he had bin. It is a godly deed & praise worthy, for a mā to set himselfe against the wicked, to defend the good against the iniuries of the wicked, to bridle their violence: but it is not for a priuate person to punish or take vengeance. Therefore it was vnlawfull for Moses to slea the Egyptian, saue only in as much as the Lord had put the sword in his hand according to the right of his calling. But this heroicall courage and noblenesse of heart was a work of the holy ghost: because God doth mightily shew foorth his power in those who he appointeth vnto great matters, that they may be able to fulfill their function. In summe, Steeuen meaneth that Moses was euen then offered to be the minister of deliuerance, when the day was at hand according to the couenant made with Abraham: yet did the people hope for nothing lesse.

26 *The day following hee appeared* Steeuen declareth nowe that the fathers did not only neglect, but maliciously reiect the grace of god. For although the euill which he mentioneth did proceed from one man onlie, yet doeth hee by right assigne the fault vnto them all. For if they had
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been thankfull to God, they woulde all with one consent haue repressed his frowardnes. But they are whisht, & suffer that good turn which Moses had done, to be vpbraided vnto him: and so much as in them lyeth, they bring him into extreeme danger, whom they ought to haue defended by endangering themselves. Therefore his drift is this, that the people themselves were in the fault, that they were no sooner deliuered and eased. So the wickednesse of men doth oftentimes hinder God from doing that he would do. He is ready to helpe those that be his in due time, but we keepe back his hand from our selues with diuers lettes: and afterward we complaine of his slownes, but vniustly. Furthermore this vnthankfulnesse was too wicked against God, & too cruell against Moses. They were to thanke God, for giuing them such a faithful patron in the kinges court. They were to loue and reuerence Moses. But they rewarded him full euil with threatnings & reproches. Furthermore, in asmuch as the fact was brought to the kinges eares, we must needs impute that to the treacherie of the people. Therefore as when afterwarde the people could see the lande of Chanaan, they did through their own follie keepe themselves fro entring in: so now refusing the grace of God in the person of one man, they cause the time of their deliuerance to be deferred fortie yeeres. For although God had determined what he would do, yet those are iustly blamed for the delay, which hinder Moses in his office.

Men, ye are brethren. There is indeed amongst men a generall coniunction, so that they ought to vse great courtesie one toward another, & to abstain from al iniuries: but this is more vnmeet, and vtollerable when those hurt one another, who are neerer linked together. Therefore Moses doth not onely vse a generall reason, that it may reuoke thir mindes which were desirous to do harme: but he mentioneth their kined & fellowship of blood to mollifie their cruelty: yet all in vaine: for hee which had done iniurie to his neighbour, doth frowardly thrust him from him, & addeth thereunto threatning. And this is a common thing amongst men. For an euill conscience doth driue men into furie, & the worse euill mans cause is, the more boldly & cruelly doth he extoll himselfe: But vnder what colour doth hee which hath the worse cause set himselfe so stubbornly against Moses? He saith, he is no iudge, but he did not reprove them according to authoritie: but did only friendly admonishe them. Is it the duerie of a iudge alone to admonish vs when wee doe amisse? But this is a common vice vsed of al stubborn & vnruely persons, to giue place to no admonitions, saue only when they are enforced by violence & authoritie: yea they are like frantike men who raile vpon their phisitions. For which cause we must be the more carefull to bridle our lusts: least we runne headlong with such blinde furie against those which are desirous to cure our vices: Furthermore wee are taught by this example, that the seruants of God cannot so doe their duerie in reprouing such vices of men, but they shall suffer many iniuries, offend many, & incurre dangers: & chiefly when they doe well, they shall surely heare euill. But they must swallow vp the vnworthines of these euils, that they may not therefore cease to do that which the Lord commanded the, & which he alloweth.

Moses is burdened here with a cruell false accusation that he vsurpeth the authoritie of a ruler, & by this means they lay treason to his charge. Secondly it is objected vnto him reprochfully, that he slue an Egyptian? both these were very odious. Whereby we may gather with how dangerous a temptation the mind of the holy man was stricken. And forasmuch as we see that he was neither discouraged by exile, neither by any other euils, so that it did not repent him of his well doing, let vs also learne by his example, to beare a valiant and strong minde and courage against all such assaultes of Satan.

30 And when fortie yeres were expired, there appeared vnto him in the deserte of mount Sina, the angel of the Lord in a flambe of fire in a bush.

31 And so soone as Moses sawe it, he wondered at the vision. Furthermore, when he drew neere to consider, the voice of the Lord came vnto him:

32 I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the god of Iacob. And Moses was afraid, & durst not draw neere.

33 And the Lord said vnto him: Put of thy shoes from thy feete. For the place wherein thou standest is holy ground.

34 In seeing I haue seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, & haue hard their mourning, and I am come downe to deliuer them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

30 And when fortie yeres were expired. As Moses was no blockishe man, euery one of vs may easilie gather, howe manie things might haue come into his minde, which might haue caused him to mistrust his calling. The shifts & sleights of Satan are captious: we are more than bent naturally to distrustfulness, what doubt's soeuer arise in our mindes concerning the worde of god, we do easily admit the same. It was a hard exchange, to be thrust from earthly delights, & a sumptuous life, vnto the painfull and base office of feeding sheepe: and especially forasmuch as Moses sawe so much time spent; and beeing in the meane season sent into the wilderness, what other thing could he imagine with him selfe, but that that was vaine, & a plain mock which the Lorde had promised? Forasmuch as being now fourescore yeres of age, he was occupied about the feeding of his father in law his sheepe, when could hee haue hoped that there should haue been any vse of him in deliuering the people? It is good for vs oftentimes to cal to mind these cunibates of the godly vntill they be thoroughly imprinted in our memorie, least our mindes faint, and our hearts faile vs, if the Lord make vs stay longer than we could wishe. Againe, Moses giuerh a notable example of modestie, seeing that in all that time hee attempth nothing, he raiseth no tumults, neither intrudeth himself any way, to beare rule: as troublesome men vse to doe: but employeth himselfe in his sheepheardes function, as diligently as if hee should neuer haue been called vnto any greater charge. But while shee tarryeth the Lordes leysure so patientely; hee appeareth vnto hym at length.

The Angel of the Lord appeared vnto him. It is first demãded who this angel was

was: and secondly why he appeared in such a forme: For after that Luke had called him an Angel, he bringeth him in immediatly speaking thus: I am the God of Abraham &c. Some answer. As God doth sometime attribute and impart vnto his ministers those things which are most proper to himselfe: so is it no absurd or inconuenient thing if they haue his name giuen them. But seeing this Angel assumeth manifestly, that he is the eternall God, who alone is, and in whom all things haue their being, we must needes restraine this title vnto the essence of God: for it can by no meanes agree to the Angels. It might be saide more fitly, that Because the Angel speaketh in the name of the Lorde, he taketh vpon him his person: as if he declared his commandements word for word, as out of the mouth of God. Which manner of speaking is vsuall in the Prophets. But when Luke shal say afterward that this was the same Angel, through whose assistance and guiding Moses deliuered the people: and Paule in the tenth Chapter of the former to the Corinthians doth affirme that Christ was that guide, there is no cause why we should now wonder, that the Angel taketh to himselfe that which is proper to God alone. Therefore let vs first of all set downie this for a suretie that there was neuer since the beginning any communication betweene god and men, saue onely by Christ. For wee haue nothing to doe with God, vnlesse the mediatour bee present to purchase his fauour for vs. Therefore this place, doeth plentifully proue the Diuinitie of Christ, and teacheth that he is of the same essence with the father. Furthermore he is called an Angel not onely because he had the Angels alwayes to beare him companie, and to be as it were his apparitours, but because that deliuerance of the people did shadowe the redemption of vs all, for whose sake Christ was to be sent of his father, that he might take vpon him the shape of a seruant together with our flesh. It is certaine in deede that God did neuer appeare vnto men as he is, but vnder some shape, agreeable to their capacitie. Notwithstanding there is another reason why Christ is called by this name, because hee being appointed by the eternall counsell of God to be vnto men the minister of saluation, doeth appeare vnto Moses to this ende. Neither is that contrarie to this doctrine, which is written in the seconde Chapter to the Hebrewes, that Christ neuer tooke the Angels, but the seede of Abraham. For although hee tooke vpon him the shape of an Angel for a time, yet did he neuer take the nature of Angels: as wee knowe that hee was made very man. It resteth that wee speake somewhat of the burning bush. That is common that God doeth applie the signes vnto the things by a certaine likelihood. And this is almost the common order and way of the sacraments. Furthermore this was the fittest thing that could haue beene shewed to Moses, to confirme his faith in the present businessse. He knewe in what state hee had left his nation; although there were a greater number of men, yet were they not vnlike to a bush. For the thicker the bush is, and the more store of shrubbes it hath, the more subiect it is to take fire, that it may burn on euery side: so the people of Israel were but a weake band, and such as was laide open to all iniuries; and this vnwarlike multitude being

1. Cor. 10. 4

Hebr. 2. 16.

being pressed downe euen with their owne weight, hadde incensed the crueltie of Pharao onely with the prosperous successe of increasing. Therefore the people being oppressed with cruell tyrannie, is as it were a pile of woode set on fire at euery corner, neither is there any thing which keepeth it from being consumed to ashes, saue this, because the Lord sitteth in the midst thereof. And although the vndoubted fire of persecution did then burne, yet because the Church of God is neuer free from afflictions in the world, the continuall estate thereof is after a sort painted out in this place. For what other thing are wee but fewell for fire? And there flie abroad innumerable fire brands of Sathan continually, which set on fire both our bodies and also our mindes: but the Lord deliuereth & defendeth vs by his wonderful and singular goodnes, from being consumed. Therefore the fire must needs burne, that it may burne vs in this life: but because the Lord dwelleth in the mids of vs, he shall so preferue vs, that afflictions shal do vs no harme: as it is also said Psalme. 46. 6, in the sixe and fourthith Psalme.

31 *He wondered at the vision.* Let vs know that God did vse thus to deale with our fathers, that they might assuredly know his maiestie. For hee meant to make a manifest distinctiō betwene the visions which he shewed, and the iuggling casts of Satan. And this certaintie is more necessarie. For what credit should the Oracles of God otherwise carry, wherein the covenant of eternall life is contained? Therefore forasmuch as this alone is the true stay of faith, it must needs haue God to bee the authour therof, that he may vndoubtedly declare that it is he that speaketh. Again forasmuch as Satan walketh about continually, & doth by many & strange shifts insinuate himself, and hath so many wayes to deceiue, and especially seing he doth pretend the name of God craftilie; we must take great heed of his mocks. We see how in times past hee deluded all nations, and the Papists also. For all the monsters of superstitions, al the dotings of errors which were in times past, and do as yet reigne in popery, did proceede from dreames, visions, and false reuelations. Yea furthermore euen the Anabaptists haue their illusions thence. Therefore this is the onely remedie, that God do distinguish by certaine markes those visions which he sheweth. For then are we without dāger of erring, whē he hath reuealed his maiestie vnto vs. For this cause was the minde of Moses stricken with admiration, and then afterward he draweth neere to consider: after that he is come neerer, the Lorde toucheth him with a more liuely feeling of his presence, so that he is afraide. For I confesse that ther is none of al these things which Satā cannot imitate: yet falsely, like an Ape. And the Lord doth not only shew himself by such signes, but helping our dulnes, he doth also open our eyes, that we may not be deceiued. Again the holy ghost doeth imprint in our minds certaine marks & tokens of Gods presence, that there may no doubt remain.

32 *I am the God of thy fathers.* Now we see to what end the vision was offered to Moses, to wit, that the word of God might haue his authoritie. For bare visions should do but a little good, vnlesse doctrine were ioyned therewithal. And it is ioyned with them not as an inferior part, but as the cause

cause of all visions & the end. And whereas he calleth himselfe the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there is a double reason why hee calleth himselfe so. As the maiestie of God is infinite, if we will comprehend it, it doth rather swallow vp our senses: if we indeuor to ascend vnto it, we vanish away. Therefore he adorneth himselfe with titles, vnder which we may comprehend him. But we must marke that God maketh choise of such titles, as that he may by them call vs backe vnto his word. For he is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for this cause, because he committed vnto them the doctrine of saluation, that he might thereby be made knowne to the worlde. But God had respect properly vnto the present circumstance, when he spake to Moses on this wise. For both this vision, and the hope of the deliuerie of the people, and the commandement which he was about to giue to Moses, did depend vpon the couenant, which he had made in times past with the fathers. So that the suspicion of noueltie is taken way, and the minde of Moses is lifted vp to hope for redemption, which was grounded in the olde promise. Therefore this title is as much as if God had saide: I which haue promised in times past to your fathers, that I haue a care of your safetie, which haue taken the kinred of Abraham to my tuition by a free couenant, yea which haue appointed this time for an end of your bondage, I appeare now vnto thee, that I may performe that which I promised. Like as at this day all the promises of God must leane & be stayed vpon this foundation, that they may be sure and certaine to vs, that God hath adopted vs in Christ, and hath promised that hee will bee our God and our father. And Christ gathereth out of this place by good reason, that the godly liue after they be deade. For if the whole man perish in death, this were an vnfitte speech, I am the God of Abraham. Let vs suppose that there is no Rome: shall not hee bee laught at, which shal call himselfe Consul of Rome? For this is requisite in Relation, that the members be answerable betweene themselves. There is also another reason to be considered, that for as much as God hath in his hand both life and death, without all doubt he preferueth those alieue whose father he will be, and whom hee counteth his children. Therefore though Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, died concerning the flesh, yet doe they liue in spirite with God.

Mat. 22.32.

And Moses being afraide. This might seeme to bee an absurde thing, that a voyce full of consolation doeth rather terrifie Moses than make him glad: but it was good for Moses to bee thus terrified with the presence of God, that hee might frame himselfe vnto the greater reuerence: Neither doeth the voice of God alone strike his minde: but his maiestie, whereof he saw a signe in the burning bush. And what marueile is it, if man bee afraide when hee seeth God? And especiallie let vs remember, that mens mindes are by this meanes prepared vnto feare & reuerence, as in Exod. xx. Thou hast seen signes, thou hast heard the sound of the trumpe, that thou maist learne to feare the Lord. But some wil say, Why dare not Moses now for feare consider, who was not afraid to draw neere before? I answer, that the neerer wee drawe vnto God,

Exod. 20.22.

God, the more his glorie doth appeare, so are we the more afraide, and that by right. And God maketh Moses afraide for none other cause, saue onely that he may make him obedient vnto him. This feare was a preparation not vnfit for greater boldnes. And to this end tendeth that which followeth, Put off thy shoes from thy feete, for he is admonished by this signe with reuerence to receiue the commaundements of God, and to giue him due glorie by all meanes.

33 *Because the place wherein.* The Lord meant by this commendation which he giueth to the place, to lift vp the minde of Moses into heauen, that he might not thinke vpon any earthly thing. And ifso be it Moses was to be pricked forward with so many pricks, that hauing forgottē the earth, he might harken to God: must not we haue our sides euē as it were digged through, seing wee are an hundreth times more slow than hee? Notwithstanding here may a question be asked, how this place became so holy? For it was no more holy than other places before that day. I answere that this honor is giuen to the presence of God, and not to the place, and that the holinesse of the place is spoken of for mans sake. For if the presence of God doe make the earth holy, howe much more force thereof ought men to haue. Notwithstanding wee must also note, that the place was thus bewtified onely for a time, so that God did not fixe
 Gene. 35.7 his glory there: as Iacob erected an altar to God in Bethel, after that God had shewed some token of his presence there. When as his posterity did imitate the same afterward, it was such worship as was reprobued. Finally the place is called holy for Moses his sake onely, that hee may the better addresse himselfe to feare God, and to obey him. Forasmuch as God doth now shew himselfe vnto vs euery where in Christ, and that in no obscure figures, but in the full light, and perfect truth, wee must not onely put off our shoes from our feete, but strippe our selues starke naked of our selues.

34 *In seing I haue seene.* God promisseth nowe that he will deliuer his people, that hee may appoint Moses to bee his minister afresh; because the former obiection was taken away by so long space of time. For God is saide to see our miseries, when hee hath respect to vs, and is carefull for our safetie: as he is said againe, to shut his eyes, and turne his backe, when as he seemeth to set light by our cause. In like sort is hee saide to come downe. He needeth not to moue out of his place to helpe vs, for his hand reacheth throughout the heauen and earth: but this is referred vnto our vnderstanding. For seing that he did not deliuer his people from their affliction, it might seeme that he was a farre off, and was busied about some other thing in heauen. Nowe he saith that the Israelites shall perceiue that hee is nigh vnto them. The summe tendeth to this end, that Moses knowing the will of God, may not doubt to follow him as a guide, and the more boldly to imploy himselfe about the deliuey of the people, which he knew was the worke of God. For we must note that hee saith that hee heard the *mourning* of the people. For although he hath respect vnto those which are in misery, and vniustly oppressed, yet when we lay our mournings & complaints in his lap, hee is
 especially

especially moued to haue mercie. Although this word may be taken for those blinde and confused complaints which are not directed vnto God; as it is taken oftentimes els where.

35. *This Moses whom they had denyed saying: Who made thee a ruler and iudge? him I say, hath God sent to be a ruler and a redeemer in the hand of the Angels which appeared vnto him in the bush.*

36. *He brought them out, hauing shewed wonders and signes in the land of Egypt, and in the red sea, and in the wildernes fortie yeeres.*

37. *This is Moses which said vnto the Children of Israel, The Lord your God shall raise vp vnto you a Prophet, out of the midst of your brethren, like vnto me: heare him.*

35. Stephen passeth ouer manie things, because he maketh haste vnto this summe, that the Iewes may vnderstande, that the fathers were not deliuered therefore, because they had deserued that with their godlineffe, but that this benefite was bestowed vpon them being altogether vnworthy: and secondly that there is some more perfect thing to be hoped for of these beginnings. When Moses being ordained of God to be their reuenger and deliuerer, was nowe in a redinesse, they stopt the way before him: therfore God doth deliuer them now, as it were against their will. That which is added touching myrales and wonders, serueth as well to the setting forth of the grace of God, as to make knowne the calling of Moses. It is surely a straunge thing, that God doth vouchsafe to declare his power by diuers wonders, for such an vnthankful peoples sake. But in the meane season he bringeth his seruant in credite. Thereafore whereas the Iewes set lesse by him afterwarde, whereas they aslaie sometimes to driue him away by railing, whereas they scould sometimes, sometimes murmur, sometimes set vpon him outragiously, they bewray thereby both their wickednes, and also their contempt of the grace of God. Their vnthankfulnesse and vngodlineffe was so encreased alwayes, that God must needs haue striven with woonderfull patience with such a froward and stubburne people.

A ruler and a deliuerer. We must vnderstande the contrarieties which augment the fault. They woulde haue obeyed Moses if a tyrant had appointed him to be a iudge, but they contemne him proudly and refuse him disdainefully being appointed of God, and that to bee a deliuerer. Therefore in despising him, they were wicked: and in reiecting grace, vnthankful. And whereas Moses hath such an honorable title giuen him, God doth not so giue and resigne vnto man that honour which is due to himselfe, that he looseth any whit of his authoritie thereby. For doubtlesse Moses was not called a Redeemer or deliuerer in any other respect, saue onely because he was the Minister of God. And by this meanes the glorie of the whole worke remaineth in the power of God wholly. Therefore let vs learne, that so often as men haue the titles which belong to God giuen them, God himselfe is not dispoyled of his honour: but because the worke is done by their handes, they are by this meanes commended.

commended. To this end tendeth that which Stephen saith, that this charge was committed to Moses in the hand of the Angel. For by this meanes Moses is made subiect to Christ, that vnder his conduct and direction, he may obey God. For Hand is taken in this place not for ministerie, but for principalitie. Wherefore God did so vse the seruice of Moses, that the power of Christ did surpasse him, as hee is euen at this day the chiefe gouernour in accomplishing the saluation of the Church, yea he vseth the ministerie of men in such sort, that the force and effect dependeth vpon him alone.

37 *A Prophet shall God raise vp.* Stephen indeuoureth vndoubtedly to proue by these words, that Christ is the end of the Law: although hee doth not expresse the same in plaine words. And assuredly (as we haue already saide) Luke reciteth not word for worde all those things which Stephen vttered: but it is sufficient for him to note the principal points of matters. Furthermore wee haue saide before in the thirde Chapter that this testimonie is so applied to Christ, that notwithstanding it agreeth to the other prophetes also. For after that Moses had forbidden the people to be carried to and fro with the wicked superstitions of the Gentiles, hee sheweth what ought to followe. There is no cause (saith hee) why thou shouldest desire Magicians and inchaunters: for God will neuer suffer thee, to want Prophetes to teach thee faithfully. And nowe it is certaine that the ministerie of the Prophetes was temporall, as was also the ministerie of the Lawe; yntill Christ shoulde bring the full perfection of wisdom into the worlde. Therefore Steephen his speech tendeth to this end, that Moses doeth not keepe the people fast bounde to himself alone, when as he setteth before them and commendeth vnto them another teacher. The Prophetes were in deede interpreters of the Law, and all their doctrine was as it were an addition or appertenance of those thinges, which were vttered by Moses: but for as much as this was also certaine, that Christ shoulde bring a more perfect kinde of doctrine, because hee shoulde make an ende of all the Prophecies: it followeth that hee is made the chiefe: and that the principall masterhippe (that I may so call it) is his, least the faith of the Gospel shoulde be doubtfull. Nowe we knowe to what end Steephen intermingleth Moses his testimonie: to wit, that he may proue that the Iewes did no lesse contemne him (of whom they made boast with open mouth to be their onely teacher) euen nowe when hee is deade, than they did in times past whiles hee liued wickedly, and frowardly reiect him. For whosoever beleueth Moses, hee will not refuse to bee the disciple of Christ, whose messenger and crier he was. For the rest out of the thirde Chapter.

John 5. 46.

or did
speake to
him in the
mount.

38. *This is he which was in the congregation in the wilderness, with the Angell which had spoken vnto him in mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received liuely Oracles that he might giue them to vs.*
39. *Whom our fathers would not obey, but they refused him, and they turned backe in their hearts into Egypt.*

40 Saying

- 40 Saying vnto Aaron, Make vs gods to goe before vs: for wee knowe not what
is hapned to this Moses which brought vs out of the land of Ægypt.
- 41 And they made a Calfe in those dayes, and they offered sacrifice to the Idoll,
and they reioyced ouer the works of their owne hands.

38 Stephen proceedeth to set foorth the frowardnesse of the people, who though they were prouoked with so manie benefites of God, yet did they neuer cease maliciously to reiect him. If they had beene disobedient and vnthankfull to God before, yet this so wonderfull a deliuerance ought to haue brought them into a better minde: but he declareth that they were alwayes like themselues. It was meere that so many myracles shoulde not onely haue stuck fast in their mindes, but also haue continued still before their eyes. But hauing forgotten all, they flie backe sodainlie vnto the superstitions of Ægypt. The memoriall of their cruell seruitude was yet fresh, which they had escaped by passing ouer the redde sea: and yet they preferre those tyrantes by whom they were more than cruelly handled, before their deliuerer. This was therefore a heape of vngodlinesse most desperate, that their stubborneesse coulde not bee broken, or ouercome with so manie benefites of God, but that they did awayes returne vnto their nature. This doeth greatly augment the greatnesse of the offence, where Steephē saith that Moses was then with them in the wildernesse. For besides that there appeareth heere rare goodnesse and long sufferance of the Lord, in bearing with them, they make themselues to be without all excuse, whiles that being beset on euery side with so manie straites, being brought into so great distresse, hauing Moses to bee their guide in their iourney, and the faithfull keeper of their life, they fall away neuerthelesse treacherously from God. Finally it appeareth that they were like vntamed beastes, whom God coulde not keepe in obedience with so manie bandes. Therefore in as much as Moses lefte not off to gouerne them euen through the wildernesse vnder the conduct and aide of the Angel, it is an easie matter to gather by this circumstance of time, how incurable and obstinate their frowardnesse was. As it was a point of monstrous rebellion, not to be humbled with miseries, and euen with the verie sight of death. Where as hee saith that Moses was with the Angel and the fathers, there is a contrarie respect. Hee was present with the fathers, that hee might bee their guide, according to the commaundement of the Lorde: he was with the Angell as a minister. Where vpon it followeth that hee was no priuate person to whom this iniurie was done, but it was done to the gouernance of God: when the people coulde bee kept backe with the reuerence of neither, from running headlong into wicked rebellion. We haue already spoken of the Angel. But the participle *lalonuos*, or, which spake, hath a double meaning. For it may be vnderstoode either of the first vision, wherby Moses was called to redeem the people, or of that speech which god had with Moses, after they were come ouer the red sea. And because Christ declared both waies that he was the author of their deliuerance,

it is no great matter whether we choose: yea there is no let, but that it may be extended vnto both. For he which beganne to speake to Moses from the beginning, that he might send him into Ægypt, did continue the tenour of his speech afterward, vntill the worke was finished.

Which receiued liuely Oracles. Erasmus translated it Liuely speech: but those which are expert in the Greek tongue, they shall know that I haue more truly translated the words of Stephen. For there is greater maiestie in Oracles then in Speech. I speake onely of the word: for I knowe that whatsoever proceedeth out of the mouth of God, the same is an Oracle. Moreouer hee purchaseth authoritie for the doctrine of Moses in these wordes, because hee vttered nothing but that which proceeded from God. Whereupon it followeth that they did not so much rebell against Moses as against God. Whereby their stubbernes is more discouered. And this is a general way to establish doctrine: when men teach nothing but that which is commaunded them by God. For what man dare make Moses inferiour to him: who (as the Spirit affirmeth) ought onely to be beleueed for this cause, because he faithfully vnfolded and deliuered the doctrine which he had receiued of God? But some man may ask this question why he calleth the lawe a liuing speech? For this title seemeth to disagree much with the words of Paul: where hee saith that the lawe is the ministerie of death, and that it worketh death, and that it is the strength of sinne. If you take liuely speech for that which is effectual, and cannot be made frustrate by the contempt of men, there shalbe no contrarietie: but I interpret it as spoken actiuelly, for that which maketh to liue. For seeing that the Law is the perfite rule of godly and holy life, and it sheweth the righteousnesse of God, it is counted for good causes the doctrine of life and saluation. And to this purpose serueth that solemne protestation of Moses, when he calleth heaven and earth to witness, that hee hath set before them the way of death and life. In which sense the Lord himself complaineth, that his good Law is broken, & his good commandements wherof he had said, He which shal do these things, shall liue in them. Therefore the Law hath life in it selfe. Yet if any man had leiffer take liuing, for that which is full of efficacie and strength, I will not greatly stande in contention. And whereas it is called the ministerie of death, that is accidentall to it, because of the corrupt nature of man. For it doth not ingender sin, but it findeth it in vs. It offereth life, but wee which are altogether corrupt, can haue nothing but death by it. Therefore it is deadly in respect of men alone. Though Stephen had respect vnto a farther thing in this place: for he doeth not onely speake of the bare commaundementes, but comprehendeth all Moses his doctrine, wherein the free promises are included, and so consequently Christ himselfe, who is the onely life and health of men. We must remember with what men Stephen had to doe. They were such as were preposterously zealous of the law, who stayed onely in the dead and deadly letter of the Lawe: and in the meane season they raged against Stephen, because he sought Christ in the Law, who is in deede the soule thereof. Therefore by touching their peruerse ignorance glancingly, he

giueth

1. Cori. 3. 7.

Ezechiel 20

giueth them to vnderstande, that there is some greater and some more excellent thing hidden in the Lawe, than they haue hitherto knowne: For as they were carnall, & content with an outward shew, they sought no spiritual thing in it, yea they would not so much as suffer the same to be shewed them.

That he might giue them to vs. This serueth to refute the false accusation, wherewith he was falsely burthened. For seeing he submitteth his necke to the yoke of the Lawe, and professeth that hee is one of Moses his scholars, hee is farre from discrediting him amongst others. Yea, rather hee turneth backe the fault which was laide to his charge, vpon those which were the authours of the slander. That was as it were a common reproch for all the people, because the fathers would not obey the Lawe. And therewithall hee telleth them, that Moses was appointed to be a Prophet, not onely for his time: but that his authoritie might be in force with the posteritie, euen when he was deade. For it is not meete that the doctrine of God shoulde bee extinguished together with the ministers, or that it should bee taken away. For what is more vnlutely than that that should dye, whereby wee haue immortalitie. So must wee thinke at this day: as the Prophetes and Apostles spake vnto the men of their time, right so did they write vnto vs, and that the force of their doctrine is continuall, because it hath rather God to bee the authour thereof, than men. In the meane season he teacheth, that if any reiect the word appointed for them, they reiect the counsell of God.

39 *They refused and were turned away.* Hee saith that the fathers reiected Moses: and hee sheweth the cause also, because they gaue themselves rather vnto the superstitions of Ægypt: which was horrible and more than blind furie, to desire the customes and ordinances of Ægypt, where they had suffered such grieuous thinges of late. Hee saith that they were turned away into Ægypt in their heartes, not that they desired to returne thither bodily, but because they returned in mind vnto those corruptions, which they ought not so much as to haue remembred, without great detestation and hatred. It is true in deede, that the Iewes did once speake of returning: but Stephen toucheth not that historie now. Furthermore he doth rather expresse their stubbernesse, when he saith that they were turned away. For after that they had taken the right way, hauing God for their guid and gouernour, they start aside suddenly: as if a stubberne vnbroken horse not obeying his rider, shoulde frowardly run backward.

40 *Make vs.* Though the Iewes bee turned backe diuerse wayes, yet Stephen maketh choise of one notable example aboue all the rest, of their filthy and detestable trecherie: to wit, when they made themselves a Calfe, that they might worship it in steede of God. For there can no more filthy thing be inuented, than this their vnthankfulnes. They confesse that they were deliuered out of Ægypt: neither do they denie that this was done by the grace of God and the ministry of Moses: yet notwithstanding they reiect the author of so great goodnesse together with

the minister. And vnder what colour? They pretend that they cannot tell what is become of Moses. But they know full well that he is in the mount. They saw him with their eies when he went vp thicher, vntil such time as the Lorde tooke him vnto himselfe, by compassing him about with a cloude. Againe, they know that Moses is absent for their healths sake, who had promised that he would returne, and bring vnto them the Lawe which God shoulde giue. He badde them onely be quiet a while. They raise madde vprores sodainely within a small time, and without any cause: yet to the ende they may couer their madnesse with the colour of some reason, they will haue Gods present with them, as if God had shewed vnto them no token of his presence hitherto: but his glory did appeare daily in the cloud and pillar of fire. Therefore we see what haste they make to commit idolatrie through wicked contempt of god, that I may in the meane season omitte to declare howe filthie and wicked their vnthankfulnes was, in that they had so soone forgotten those myracles, which they ought to haue remembred euen vntill the ende of the worlde. Therefore by this one backsliding it appeareth sufficientlie what a stubberne and rebellious people they were. Moreouer it was more expedient for the cause which Stephen had in hand, to recite this historie of their rebellion than the other. For the people doeth quite ouerthrowe the worshippe of God, they refuse the doctrine of the Law, they bring in a straunge and prophane religion. And this is a notable place, because it pointeth out the fountain from which all maner of superstitions did flowe synce the beginning, and especially, what was the first beginning of making Idols: to wit, because man which is carnall, will notwithstanding haue God present with him, according to the capacitie of his flesh. This is the cause why men were so bolde in all ages, to make Idols. And God doeth in deede apply himselfe to our rudenesse thus farre, that he sheweth himselfe visiblie after a sort vnder figures. For there were manie signes vnder the Law to testifie his presence. And he commeth downe vnto vs euen at this day by Baptisme, and the Supper, and also by the externall preaching of the worde. But men offende two manner of wayes in this: for first being not content with the meanes which God hath appointed, they boldly get to themselues new meanes. This is no small fault, because their fingers itch alwayes to haue new inuentions without keeping any meane, and so they are not afraid to passe the bounds which God hath appointed them. But there can be no true image of God, saue that which he appointed. Therefore what images so euer are feigned and inuented by man besides his word, they are false & corrupt. There is also another vice no lesse intollerable, that as mans minde conceiueth nothing of God but that which is grosse and earthly, so it translateth all tokens of Gods presence vnto the same grossenesse. Neither doth man delight in those idols onely, which hee himselfe hath made, but also doth corrupt whatsoever God hath ordeined, by wresting it vnto a contrary end. God commeth downe vnto vs in deede as I haue already said: but to this ende, that he may lift vs vp into heauen with him. But we, because wee are wholly set vpon the earth, will in like sort haue him

him in the earth. By this meanes is his heavenly glorie deformed, and that fulfilled altogether which the Israelites say here, *Make vs gods*. For whosoever he be that doth not worship God spiritually, he maketh vnto himselfe a new God. and yet if yee thoroughly weigh al things, the Israelites will not haue a God made of set purpose by them, but they thinke rather that they haue the true and eternall God vnder the shape of the golden Calfe. For they are ready to offer the appointed sacrifice, & they approue that with their consent, which Aaron saith, that those are the gods by whom they were brought out of Ægypt. But God passeth not for those friuolous imaginations: but he complaineth that men put strange gods in his place, so soone as they depart euen a verie little from his word.

41 *And they made a Calfe.* We may easily gather by that which goeth before, why they were more delighted in that figure than in any other. For although Ægypt did swarme with innumerable idols, yet it is well knowne, that they made the greatest account of an Oxe. And whence is it that they are so desirous to haue an Idoll, saue onely because they were turned backe into Ægypt, as Stephen hath already said? We must note the speech, when hee saith that they offered sacrifice to the Idoll. Aaron commaundeth the people to assemble themselves together to worship God: they come altogether. Therefore they testifie that they meane nothing lesse than to defraud God of his worshippe, howsoever they translate the same vnto the Calfe. Yea rather they are determined, to worshippe God in the image of the Calfe. But because they forsooke the true God, by making an Idoll, whatsoever followeth afterward, it is iudged to be giuen to the Idol: because God refuseth al wicked worshipping. For it is not meete to account that as bestowed vpon him, which he hath not commaunded, and because hee forbid them expressly to erect any visible image vnto him, that is meere sacriledge what soeuer is done afterward in honour thereof.

They reioyced ouer the workes. This speech is taken out of Iesaias, yea out of the Prophets, who in like sort vpbraide vnto the Iewes that they were delighted in their owne inuentions. And surely it is wonderfull madnesse, when men arrogate vnto themselves any thing in Gods matters. I take this reioycing to bee that solempne daunsing whereof Moses speaketh in the two and thirtieth Chapter of Exodus. Yet Stephen toucheth a common vice, wherewith Idolaters are infected. For although it be altogether vnlawful for men to attempt any thing in religion which God hath not appointed: yet doe they inuent euery thing vnaduisedly, and setting light by the word of God, they make choise of the workes of their owne hands. But Stephen sheweth that whiles they take such pleasure in this libertie, they displease God so much the more. But if we will haue God to allow our worship, we must abstaine from the workes of our hands, that is from our owne inuentions. For all that which men inuent of themselves, is nothing else but sacrilegious profanation. The Idol is properly so called reprochfully, as it were a thing nothing worth, because no reason doth suffer man to make God.

- 43 And God turned himselfe, and gaue them vp to worship the host of heauen: as it is written in the booke of the Prophets, *Haue yee offered vnto mee slaine beastes, and sacrifices by the space of fortie yeeres in the wildernesse O yee house of Israel?*
- 43 And yee tooke to you the Tabernacle of Moloch, and the starre of your God Rempham, and figures which yee made to worship them. Therefore I will carry you away beyond Babilon.

Steuens wil here declare, that the Iewes did neuer make an end of sinning, but that they wandred farther in their froward errors: so that that first fal of theirs, was vnto them as it were an entrance into a Labyrinth. And this doth he assigne vnto the iust vengeance of God, that after that time their madnesse grew so, that they gat for one Idoll infinite. This example teacheth vs to be careful to follow the rule which God hath set downe: because so soone as wee are turned euen but a little a side from the same, we must needs be carried too and fro with diuise dornings, we must needs be intangled in many superstitions, and be vtterly drowned in the huge sinke of errors. Which punishment God in iustice laith vpon men, which refuse to obey his worde. Therefore Stephen saith that God was turned away; which word importeth as much as if he shoulde say, that he turned his backe. For hee had fastened his eyes after a sorte vpon the people, when hee shewed his singular care which he tooke in gouerning them, being offended with their falling away, nowe hee turneth his face another way. We may also hereby gather that we can no otherwise followe the right way, saue onely when the Lord watcheth ouer vs to gouerne vs: but so soone as his face is turned away, we runne by and by into errors. The Israelites were forsaken of God euen then, when they made the Calfe: but Stephen meant to expresse the greatnesse of the punishment, as if he should haue saide, that they were altogether cast off into a reprobate sense then, as Paule also teacheth, that those which gaue not glorie to God when he had shewed himselfe vnto them, were by the iust iudgement of God giuen vp vnto blindness, and blockishnesse, and vnto shamefull lustes. Hereby it came to passe, that after that religion began to bee corrupt, innumerable abominations, succeeded a fewe superstitions, and grosse monsters of Idolatry, came in place of light corruptions. For because men neglected the light which was set before them, they became altogether blockish by the iust iudgement of God, so that they had no more iudgement than brute beastes. Idolatrye surely is very fertill, that of one feigned God, there shoulde by and by come an hundreth, that a thousande superstitions shoulde flowe from one. But this so great madnesse of men springeth hence, because God reuengeth himselfe by deliuering them to Sathan: because after hee hath once taken in hande to gouerne vs, there is no change in his parte, but hee is pluckt away from vs by our rash lightnesse.

Rom. 1. 28.

Amos 5. 25. *Haue yee offered vnto mee slaine beastes and sacrifices.* This place is taken out of the first Chapter of Amos. The speech which Stephen useth sheweth

sheweth that all the prophecies were gathered into one bodie. And Amos addeth (after that he had inueighed against the Idolatrie and sundrie sinnes of the people) that this is no new euill, that the Iewes are rebellious against God, because their fathers had fallen away from true godlinesse euen in the wilderness. Furthermore he denieth that they offered slaine beastes to him, not because there were there no sacrifices at al, but because god refused their corrupt worship: like as he reproceth & chideth the people in Isaias, because they honored him with no sacrifice, Thou (saith he) O Iacob, hast not called vpon mee, neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices, neither haue I made thee serue in offering or incense. Thou hast not bought for mee calamus; neither hast thou filled mee with fatnesse. But thou hast beene burdenous vnto me in thy sinnes, and hast caused me to serue in thine iniquities. Assuredly the Iewes did all these thinges daily, but God accepteth not the obedience of the wicked, neither doth he approue the same. Againe he abhorreth all that which is polluted with such mingle mangles as are added. Thus doth Amos speake of the fathers which were reuolts. That which is added forthwith, may bee referred either vnto them or vnto their posteritie.

Isa. 43. 22.

43 *You tooke to you the tabernacle of Moloch.* Some take the copulatiue for the aduersatiue, as if he should say, Yea rather yee worshipped the Idoll. It may be resolued also into the coniunction causall, thus, You did not offer sacrifices to me, because yee erected a tabernacle to Moloch. But I expound it somewhat otherwise, to wit, that God doth first accuse the fathers for the more vehemencie: and then afterwarde he addeth, that their posteritie did encrease the superstitions, because they gat to themselves new and diuerse Idols: as if the Prophet had spoken thus in the person of God, If I shall rippe vp from the beginning (O house of Iacob) howe your kinred hath behaued it selfe towarde me, your fathers beganne to ouerthrowe and corrupt, euen in the wilderness, that worshippe which I had commanded: but you haue farre passed their vngodlinesse, for you haue brought in an infinite companie of Gods. And this order is fitter for Stephen his purpose. For he intendeth to prooue (as we haue already said) that after the Israelites fel away vnto strange and bastardi rites: they neuer made an ende of sinning: but being stricken with blindness, they polluted themselves euer nowe and then with newe Idolatries, vntill they were come euen vnto the last end of impietie. Therefore Steephen confirmeth this sentence fitly with the testimonie of the Prophet, that the Iewes descending of wicked and rebellious fathers, had neuer ceased to wax worse and worse. And although the Prophetes wordes be somewhat vnlike to these, yet is the sense all one. It is to be thought that Stephen who had to deale with the Iewes, did repete worde for worde in their tongue, that which is in the Prophet: Luke which wrote in Greeke, did followe the Greeke interpreter. The Prophet saith Yee honoured Succoth your king, and Ciiim your image, the starre of your gods. The Greeke interpreter made a nowne common of anowne proper, because of the aliance of the word Succoth,

which signifieth a Tabernacle. Furthermore I cannot tell whence he fetcheth that his Remphan: vntlesse it were because that word was more vsed in that time.

And figures which yee made. The worde Image which is in the Prophet, doeth of it selfe signifie no euill thing. Moreouer the worde *typos* is taken amongst the Grecians in good part. For the Ceremonies which God appointed, are called *typoi*. Notwithstanding the Prophet condemneth expresse the figures which the Iewes had made. Why so? Because God will not be worshiped vnder a visible and externall forme. If any man object that hee speaketh in this place, of starres: that is true I confesse: but I stande onely vpon this, that although the Prophet doth giue their Idols some honest name, yet doeth hee sharply condemne their corrupt worshippe. Whereby the foolish and childish cauilling of the Papistes is refuted. Because they denie that those images which they worshippe, are Idols, they say that that madde worshippe of theirs is *eiconodouleia* or seruing of Images, and not *eidolodouleia* or worshiping of Idols. Seeing they mocke God sophistically, there is no man that is indewed euen but with common vnderstanding, which doeth not see that they are more than ridiculous euen in such toyes. For although I moue no question about the woorde, it is certaine that the worde *typos* is more honourable than *eiconos*. But those same *typoi* or figures are simplie condemned in this place, which men make to themselues not onely *pros ten latreian*, or that they may worshippe them, but *pros ten profanefin*, that is, that they may giue them euen any reuerence at all. Therefore that filthie distinction falleth flat to the ground, wherein the Papists thinke they haue a craftie starting hole.

Beyond Babylon. The Prophet nameth Damascus: neither doeth the Greeke interpretation dissent from the same. Wherefore it may be that the word Babylon crope in here through error. Though in the summe of the thing there be no great difference. The Israelites were to be carried away to Babylon: but because they thought that they had a sure and strong fortresse in the kingdome of Syria, whose head Damascus was: therefore the Prophet saith, that Damascus shall not helpe them, but that God shall driue them farther, as if hee shoulde say, So long as you haue Damascus set against your enemies, you thinke that you are well fenced: but God shall carry you away beyond it: euen into Assyria and Chaldea.

44 Our fathers had the testimonie of witnesse in the wildernesse, like as he had appointed speaking to Moses, that he should make it according to the forme which he had seene.

45 Which tabernacle our fathers which succeeded, brought with Iesus into the possession: of the Gentiles, which God draue out before the face of our fathers, vntill the dayes of David.

46 Who found fauour before God: and desired that he might finde a tabernacle for the God of Iacob:

- 47 But Solomon built him an house.
 48 But the most highest dwelleth not in temples made with hands: as the Prophet saith,
 49 Heauen is my seate, and the earth is my foote stoole. What house will ye build for me? saith the Lorde: or what place is it that I should rest in?
 50 Hath not my hand made all these things.

44 *The Tabernacle of witnessse.* Stephen sheweth heere that the blame cannot be laide vpon God; because the Iewes polluted themselues with diuers superstitions, as if God had suffered them to wander freely. For he saith that God had commaunded howe he would bee worshipped by them. Whereupon it followeth that they were intangled in so manie errors, because they would not follow that forme which God had appointed. Although he girdeth them for two causes: Because being not content with that rule alone which God had prescribed, they inuented to themselues strang worshipps: secondly because they had no respect vnto the right end of the temple, and of the ceremonies which God had appointed. For whereas they ought to haue ben vnto them exercises of the spirituall worshippe, they apprehended nothing but that which was carnall, according to their carnall nature, that is, they tooke the shadowe for the bodie.

Therefore wee see that the Iewes were first reprehended for their boldnesse, for because that being not content with the plaine worde of God, they were carried away after their owne inuentions. Secondlie they are reprooued for the preposterous abuse of the true and sincere worship: because they followed the flesh in steede of the Spirite. They had, saith he, the Tabernacle of witnessse. Therefore it was their owne wantonnes and rashnesse onely, which caused them to sinne. For seeing they were wel taught, what was the right way and order of worshiping God, all cloake and colour of ignorance was taken away. Which thing is worth the noting. For seeing God doeth after a sort bridle vs, when he maketh his will knowne vnto vs, if after we haue receiued his commaundement, wee turne aside either vnto the right hand or to the left, we be twise gilty: because the seruauit which knoweth his masters will, and doeth it not, shall suffer more stripes. This is the first marke whereby the holy Spirit doeth distinguish all bastardlie and corrupt worshipps from the true and sincere worshippe. Yea (to speake more briefly) the first difference betweene true worship and Idolatrie is this, when the godly take in hand nothing but that which is agreeable to the word of God: but the other thinke all that lawfull which pleaseth themselues: and so they count their owne wil a Law, whereas God alloweth nothing but that which hee himselfe hath appointed. To this end serueth the word *witnessse*.

The Hebrew word *Moed*, signifieth in deede an appointed place, and time, or an assemble of men: but the reason expressed in Moses, sheweth that there is another cause why it is so named. For in Moses this

is oftentimes repeated, I will meeete with you there. Therefore the Tabernacle was consecrated by the couenant and worde of the Lorde, and his voice was hearde there continually, that it might bee distinguished from all prophane places.

According to the forme which hee had seene. This is referred vnto the seconde point which I haue touched. For it may bee that hee which shall vse the Ceremonies onely which God appointed, shall notwithstanding worship God amisse. for God careth not for externall rites, saue onely in as much as they are tokens of the heavenly trueth. Therefore God would haue the Tabernacle to bee made like vnto the heavenly figure, that the Iewes might knowe that they were not to stay still in the externall figures. Furthermore let him which is disposed, read my commentaries vppon the Epistle to the Hebrewes, and he shall see what that figure whereof mention is made Exodus 25. did signifie. Stephen doeth onely briefly tell them in this place that the worshippe which God commaunded the Iewes, is spiritual, and that they according to their carnal blockishnesse were euill and false interpreters. Therefore as wee haue saide that God alloweth no worshippe but that which is grounded in his commaundement: so wee are taught heere, that it is requisite in the right vse of the commaundement, that the spirituall trueth be present. Which thing being graunted, it was the like question which wee saide did consist principally in this issue, Whether the shadowes ought to yeelde to the bodie or no. Whereas Moses is saide to haue seene a *forme or figure*, the Spirite of God signifieth thereby, that it is vnlawfull for vs to inuent formes at our pleasures, but that all our senses must be set vppon that forme which God sheweth; that all our religion may bee formed according to it. The worde *figure* signifieth heere in this place the principall patterne which is nothing else but the spirituall truth.

45 *Which they brought in.* This serueth to encrease the frowardnesse of the nation, that where as the Tabernacle did continue with them, and they carryed the same whither so euer they went, yet could they not be kept within the boundes of Gods couenant, but they would haue straunge and prophane rites, to wit, declaring that God dwelt amidst them, from whom they were so farre distant, and whom they did driue out of that inheritance which he had giuen them. To this purpose serueth that also, that God did bewtise the Tabernacle with diuerse myracles: for the worthinesse thereof was established by those victorie which the Iewes had gotten, as it appeareth by diuerse places of the holie historie. Therefore it must needs be that they were very disobedient, which did nor cease oftentimes to start aside from that worship which was so many wayes approued.

Vntill the dayes of Dauid. Although the Arke of the Lorde continued long in Silo, yet it had no certaine place vntill the reigne of Dauid. 1.Sam. 1. 3. For it was vnlawfull for men to erect a place for the same, but it was 2.Sam. 24. 11. to be placed in that place which the Lord had shewed, as Moses saith oftentimes.

Neither

Neither durst Dauid him selfe after hee had taken it from the enemies, bring it into the threshing floore of *Areuna*, vntill the Lord had declared by an Angell from heauen, that that was the place which hee had chosen. And Steeuen counteth this a singular benefite of God not without great cause, that the place was shewed to Dauid, wherein the Israelites should hereafter worship God. As in the Psalmes, he reioycest as ouer some notable thing: I was glad when they said vnto me, We will go into the house of the Lord, our feet shalbe stable in thy courtes, O Ierusalem. The priesthood was coupled with the kingdom. Therefore the stabilitie of the kingdome is shewed in the resting of the arke. Therefore it is said that he desired this so earnestly, that he bound himselfe with a solemne vow, that he would not come within his house, that his eyes shuld enioy no sleepe, nor his temples any rest, vntill hee should know a place for the Lord, and a tabernacle for the God of Iacob. Furthermore the place was shewed to Dauid, but it was graunted to Salomon to build the temple.

Psal. 132. 3.

1. Reg. 5. 3.

47 *Salomon built.* Steeuen seemeth to gird Salomon glauncinglye in this place, as if he did not regard the nature of God in building the temple, yet did he attempt that work not without the commaundement of God. There was also a promise added, wherein God did testifie that he would be present with his people there. I answered that when Steeuen denieth that God dwelleth in temples made with hands, that is not referred vnto Salomon, who knew full well that God was to bee sought in heauen, and that mens mindes must be lifted vp thither by faith. Which thing he vttered also in that solenne prayer which he made. The heauens of heauens doe not containe thee: and how much lesse this house? but he reproveth the blockishnesse of the people, which abused the temple, as if it had had God tied to it. Which appeareth more plainly by the testimonie of Isaias, which he citeth also: God, saith he, wold haue Salomon to build him a temple, but they were greatly deceiued who thought that he was as it were included in such a building: as he complaineth by his Prophet, that the people doe him iniurie when as they imagine that he is tyed to a place. But the Prophet doth not for that cause onely inueigh against the Iewes, because they worshipped God superstitiously, thinking that his power was tied to the temple, but because they did esteeme him according to their owne affection, and therefore after that they had ended their sacrifices and externall pompe, they imagined that he was pleased, and that they had brought him indebted to them. This was almost a common error in all ages, because men thought that cold ceremonies were sufficient enough for the worship of God. The reason is, because for asmuch as they are carnal & wholie set vpon the world, they imagine that God is like to them. Therefore to the end God may take from them this blockishnesse, he saith that he filleth all things.

Isay. 6. 6.

49 For whereas hee saith, that *heauen* is his seate, and the *earth* his foorestoole: it must not be so vnderstood, as if he had a body, or could be diuided into parts after the maner of men: but because he is infinit, therefore he saith, that he cannot be comprehended within any spaces of place.

There

Psal. 132. 14

Therefore those men are deceiued, who esteeme God or his worship according to their own nature. And because the Prophet had to deal with hypocrites, he doth not only dispute about the essence of God: but also teacheth generally, that he is far vnlike to men, & that he is not moued with the vaine pompe of this worlde, as they are. Here ariseth that question also, why the Prophet saith that the Lorde hath no place of rest in the worlde, whereas notwithstanding the Spirite affirmeth the contrarie els where, Psal. 132. This is my rest for euer. Moreouer Isaiaes doth adorne the church with this selfe same title, that it is the glorious rest of God: alluding vnto the temple. I answer, that when GOD appointed signes of his presence in the temple & sacrifices in times past, he did not this to the end he might settle and fasten himselfe and his power there. Therefore the Israelites did wickedly, who setting their mindes wholly vpon the signes, did forge to themselves an earthly God. They deale also vngodlike, who vnder this colour tooke to themselves libertie to sin, as if they could readily & easily pacifie god with bare ceremonies. Thus doth the world vse to mock God. When God doth declare by the externall rites that he will be present with his, that he may dwell in the midst of them, he commaundeth them to lifte vp their mindes, that they may seek him spiritually. Hypocrites which are intangled in the world, wil rather pluck God out of heauen: and whereas they haue nothing but vain & bare figures, they are puffed vp with such foolish confidence, that they pamper themselves in their sinnes carelessly. So at this day the Papists include Christ in the bread & wine in their imaginatio: that don so sone as they haue worshipped their idoll with a foolish worship, they vaunte & crack, as if they were as holy as angels. We must diligently note these two vices, that men do superstitiously forge to them selues a carnall and worldly God which doth so come down vnto them, that they remaine still hauing their mindes set vpon the earth, & that they rise not vppe in mind to heauen. Again they dreame that God is pacified with friuolous obedience. Hereby it commeth to passe that they are besotted in the visible signes: & secondly that they go about to bring God indebted to the after a childish maner, & with things which bee nothing worth. Now we vnderstand in what sense the prophet saith, that god hath no place of rest in the world. He would indeed that the temple should haue byn a signe & pledge of his presence, yet only to the godlie which did ascend into heauen in heart, which did worship him spiritually with pure faith. But he hath no place of rest with the superstitious, who through their foolish inuentions, tie him vnto the elements of the world, or do erect vnto him an earthly worship: neither yet with Hypocrites, who are puffed vp with drunken confidence, as if they had done their dutie toward god wel, after that they haue plaied in their toys. In summe, the promise receiued by faith, doth cause God to heare vs in his temple, as if he were present, to shew forth his power in the sacraments: but vnlesse we rise vp vnto him by faith, we shall haue no presence of his. Hereby we may easily gather, that when he dwelleth amidst those that be his, he is neither tyed to the earth, neither comprehended in any place, because they seeke him spiritually

uallie in heauen.

50 *Hath not mine hande.* The Prophete telleth the people in these words, that god hath no need either of gold, either of precious furniture of the temple, either of the sacrifices: whereupon it followeth that his true worship is not conteyned in ceremonies. For he desireth none of all these things which we offer vnto him, for his own sake, but only that he may exercise vs in the studie of godlines, which argument is handeled more at large Psal. 50. For although this be a shamefull foolishnes, to go about to feed god with sacrifices; yet vnlesse hypocrits were drowned in the same, they would make no such account of toyces: because all that is vnfaueiry before God, which dissenteth from the spiritual worship. Therefore let vs know that God seeketh vs & not ours, which we haue only at pleasure. And hereby it appeareth also what great difference there is between true religion & the carnall inuentions of men.

51 *You stiffnecked and of an vncircumcised heart and eares, yee haue alwayes resisted the holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do yee.*

52 *Which of the Prophetes haue not your fathers persecuted? and they haue slain those which foretold of the comming of the Iust, of whom you are now made the betrayers and murderers.*

53 *Who haue receiued the lawe in the dispositions of Angelles, and haue not kept it.*

51 For asmuch as Steeuen doth not expressly answere the points of the accusation, I am of their minde who thinke that he would haue said more, if his oration had not been broken off with some vprore. For wee know what a sessions of iudges he had. Therefore no maruell if they enforced him to hold his peace with noyse & outcries. And we see also, that he did vse long insinuation of set purpose, that he might tame & appease them, who were like brute beastes most cruell. But it is likely that their madnesse was then incensed, when hee proued that they had most wickedly corrupt the law, that the tēple was polluted with their superstitions, & that there is nothing sincere amongst them, because whiles they did sticke in bare figures, they did not worship God spiritually: because they did not referre the ceremonies vnto the heauēly figure. But thogh Steeuen did not enter the cause straight way, but assayed to make their fierce mindes somewhat more gentle by little and little: yet did he reason very fitly to purge him self of the crime laid to his charge. These two things, as we haue said, were the principall points of the question, That Steeuen had blasphemed God and his temple, That hee went about to disanull the lawe. That Steeuen might cleere himself of both these false flauēders, he begā at the calling of Abraham, & declareth that the Iewes excelled the Gentiles, not of their own nature, not by anyright of their own, not by any merites of workes, but by a free priuiledge, because god had adoped the in the person of Abraham. This is also very pertinent to the cause, that the couenant of saluatiō was made with Abraham, before any tēple or ceremonies were, yea before circumcisō was appointed. Of which

which things the Iewes did so boast, that they said ther was no worship of God without them, neither any holinesse. After that he set down how wonderfull and manifold the goodnesse of God was towards Abraham his stocke, and againe howe wickedly and frowardly they had refused so much as in them lay, the grace of God. Whereby it appeareth that it cannot bee ascribed to their owne merites, that they are counted Gods people: but because God did choose them of his owne accord being vnworthie, & did not cease to do the good, though they were most vnthakfull. Their loftie and proude spirites might by this meanes haue bin subdued, tamed, and humbled, that being emptied of that wind of foolish glory, they might come vnto the mediator. Thirdly, he declared that the Angell was the gouernour and chiefe in giuing the lawe and deliuering the people: and that Moses did so serue in his function, that hee taught that there should come other prophets hereafter, who should notwithstanding haue one which should be the chief of the, that he might make an end of all prophecies, & that he might bring the perfect accomplishment of them all. Whereby it is gathered that these are nothing lesse than Moses his disciples, who reiect that kinde of doctrine which was promised and commended in the law, together with the authour thereof. Last of all he sheweth that all the olde worship which was prescribed by Moses, is not to bee esteemed of it selfe, but that it ought rather to be referred to another end, because it was made according to the heauenly paterne: and that the Iewes haue alwayes been wicked interpreters of the law: because they conceiued nothing but that whiche was earthly. Hereby is it proued that there is no iniurie done to the temple and the lawe, when Christ is made as it were the end and truth of both. But because the state of the cause did consist chiefly in this: that the worshippinge of G O D doeth not properlie consist in sacrifices and other things, and that all ceremonies did nothing els but shadow Christe. Steeuen was purposed to stand vppon this point, if the Iewes would haue permitted him: but because when he was come to the pith of the matter, they cannot abyde to heare any more, they were so incensed with furie; the application of those things which hee had said, vnto this cause which hee had in hand, is wanting. And he is inforced to vse a sharpe reprehension for a conclusion: *Yee of an hard neck*, saith he. We see how soone he is offended with them with an holy zeale: but because he saw that he spake many things to small end, especially before deafe men, he breaketh off his doctrine. This is a Metaphor taken from horses or oxen, which Moses vseth often, when he will say that his people is a rebellious people & disobedient to God, and also vnruely: The vpbraiding which foloweth, was of greater force with them. Circumcision was vnto them a veile & couering to couer all vices. Therefore when he calleth them vncircumcised in heart, he doth not only meane that they are rebellious against god & stubborn: but that they were found treacherous & couenāt breakers euen in that signe whereof they did so greatly boast, and so he turneth that backe most fitly to their shame, whereof they made boast to their glorie. For this is all one as if hee shoulde haue said, that they had
broken

Exod. 32.9.
& 33.3.5.

broken the couenant of the Lord, so that their circumcision was void & profane. This speech is taken out of the law and the prophetes. For as god hath appointed the signe, so he would haue the Iewes know to what end they were circumcised: to wit, that they might circūcise their hearts and all their corrupt affections to the Lord, as we reade, And now circūcise your heartes to the Lorde. Wherefore the letter of circūcisi- on, as Paule calleth it, is a vain visure with God. So, forasmuch as at this day, the spirituall washing is the truth of our baptisme, it is to be feared least that may well bee objected to vs, that wee are not partakers of Baptisme, because our soules and flesh are polluted with filthinesse.

Rom. 2. 28.

See haue alwayes resisted. At the first Steeuē vouchsafed to call these men Fathers and brethren, against whom hee inueigheth thus sharply. Therefore so long as there remained any hope, that they might be made more gentle, he dealt not only friendlie with them, but he spake honorably vnto them: now so soone as he espieth their desperate stubbornesse, he doth not only take from them all honour, but least he should haue a nie fellowship with them, he speaketh vnto them as vnto men of another kinred. You, saith he, are like to your fathers, who haue alwayes rebelled against the spirit of God. But hee himselfe came of the same Fathers: and yet that he may couple himselfe to Christe, he forgetteth his kinred, in as much as it was wicked. And yet for al this, he bindeth them not all in one bundle as they say, but he speaketh vnto the multitude. And those are said to resist the Spirit, who reiect him whē he speaketh in the prophetes. Neither doth hee speake in this place of secrete reuelations, wherewith God inspireth euery one: but of the externall ministrie. Which we must note diligētly. He purposeth to take from the Iewes, all colour of excuse. And therefore he vpbraideth vnto them, that they had purposely, and not of ignorance, resisted God. Wherby it appeareth, what great account the Lord maketh of his word, and howe reuerently he will haue vs to receiue the same. Therefore least like Gyants we make warre against God, let vs learne to hearken to the ministers, by whose mouth he teacheth vs.

52 *Which of the Prophets.* For as much as they ought not to beare their fathers fault, Steeuē seemeth to deale vniustly, in that he reckoneth this amongst their faultes, vnto whom he speaketh: but he had iust causes so to doe. First because they did vaunt that they were Abraham his holy progenie, it was worth the labour to shew vnto them how great vanitie that was, as if Steuē should say, that there is no cause why they should vaunt of their stock, for as much as they come of those who were wicked murderers of the prophetes. So that he toucheth that glancinglie, which is more plainly set downe by the prophetes, that they are not the children of prophetes, but a degenerate and bastardly issue, the seed of Chanaan &c. Which thing we may at this day object to the papistes, when as they so highly extoll their fathers. Furthermore, this serueth to amplifie withall, whereas he saith, That it is no new thing for them to resist the truth: but that they haue this wickednesse, as it were by inheritance from their fathers. Furthermore, it was requisite for Steuē by this

this meanes to plucke from their faces the visage of the church, where- with they burthened him. This was an vnmeete preiudice against the doctrine of the Gospel, in that they boasted that they are the church of God, and did challenge this title by long succession. Therefore Stee- uen preuenteth them on the contrary, and proueth that their Fathers did no lesse than they, rage against the prophets, through wicked con- tempt and hatred of sound doctrine. Lastly this is the continuall custome of the scripture, to gather the fathers and children together vnder the same guiltinesse, seeing they pollute themselves with the same offences, & that famous sentence of Christ answereth thereto. Fulfil the measure of your fathers vntill the iust blood come vpon you, from Abell vnto Za- charias.

Rom. 10. 4.

Who haue foretold. Hereby we gather that this was the drift of all the prophets to direct their nation vnto Christ: as he is the end of the lawe. It were too long to gather all the prophesies wherein the comming of Christ was foretold. Let it suffice to know this generally, that it was the common office of all the prophets to promise saluation by the grace of Christ. Christe is called in this place the Iust, not onely to note his inno- cencie, but of the effect: because it is proper to him, to appoint iustice in the world. And euen in this place doth Steeuen proue that the Iewes were altogether vnworthie of the benefit of redemption: because the fa- thers did not onely refuse that in times past, which was witnessed vnto them by the prophets, but they did also cruelly murder the messengers of grace: & their children induored to extinguish the authour of righ- teousnes and saluation which was offered vnto them. By which compa- rison Christe teacheth that the wicked conspiracie of his enemies was an heape of iniquities.

53 *Who haue receiued the law.* They called that furie wherewith they raged against Steuen, zeale of the law: as if he had been a forsaker of the law, & a reuolt, & had enforced others to fall away in like sort. Although he was determined to cleere himself of this false accusation, yet hee did not go through with his answer. For he could not be hearde, & it was to no end to speak to deaf men. Therefore he is content at a word to take fro the their false colour & pretence. It is euident, saith he, that you lie when you pretend the zeale of the law, which you transgresse & break without ceasing: & as he objected vnto them in the words next going before, the treacherous murder of the Iust: so now he vpbraideth vnto them their reuolting from the lawe. Some man will say that Steuens cause is no whit bettered hereby, because the Iewes breake the law. But as wee haue already said, Steuen doth not so chide them, as if his defence did prin- cipally consist in this issue, but that they may not flatter theselues in their false boasting. For hypocrites must be handled thus, who wil notwith- standing seeme to be most earnest defenders of Gods glory, though in deed they contemne him carelesly. And here is also a fit Antistrophe, be- cause they made semblance that they receiue the law which was com- mitted to them, which was notwithstanding reprochfully despised by them.

In the dispositions of angels. It is word for word, *into the dispositions*, but it is all one. Furthermore we need not seek any other interpreter of this saying than Paul, who saith, that the law was disposed or ordeined by angels. For he useth the participle there, whereof this nowne is deriued. And his meaning is that the angels were the messengers of God, & his witnesses in publishing the law, that the authoritie thereof might be firme & stable. Therefore forasmuch as God did call the angels to be as it were solemn witnesses when he gaue the Iewes his law, the same Angels shal be witnesses of their vnfaithfulnesse. And to this end doth Steuen make mention of the Angels, that he may accuse the Iewes in presence of them, & proue them gilty, because they haue transgressed the lawe. Heereby wee may gather what shal become of the despisers of the gospel, which doth so far excell the law, that it doth after a sort darken the glory thereof, as Paul teacheth 2. Cor. 3.

Gal. 3. 16.

34 Furthermore when they heard these things, they were cut asunder in their hearts, and they gnashed vpon him with their teeth.

35 But forasmuch as he was full of the holy Ghoste, he looked vp stedfastly into heauen, and saw the glory of God, and Iesus standing at the right hand of God.

36 And he said: Behold, I see the heauens open, and the Sonne of man standing at the right hande of God. And they cryed with a lowde voyce, and stopped their eares.

37 And with one accord they ran vpon him:

38 And hauing cast him out of the citie, they stoned him.

34 *When they heard.* The beginning of the action had in it some colour of iudgement: but at length the Iudges can not bridle their furie. First they interrupt him with murmuring and noise, now they break out into enuious and deadly cryings, least they should heare any one worde. Afterwarde they hale the holy man out of the citie, that they may put him to death. And Luke expresseth properly, what force Satan hath to driue forward the aduersaries of the word. When he saith, that *they burst asunder inwardly*, he noteth that they were not only angrie, but they were also stricken with madnesse. Which furie breaketh out into the gnashing of the teeth, as a violent fire into flame. The reprobate who are at Satan his commaundement, must needs be thus moued with the hearing of the word of God: & this is the state of the Gospell, it driueth hypocrites into madnesse, who might seeme before to be modest: as if a drunken man which is desirous of sleepe, be sodainly awaked. Therefore Simeon assigneth this to Christ as proper to him, to diclose the thoughts of many heartes. Yet notwithstanding this ought not to bee ascribed to the doctrine of saluation, whose end is rather this, to frame mens minds to obey god, after that it hath subdued them. But so soone as Satan hath possessed their mindes, if they bee vrged, their vngodlinesse will breake out. Therefore this is an accidentarie euil, yet we are taught by these examples, that we must not looke that the worde of God shoulde drawe all men vnto a sound mind,

Luke. 2. 35.

Which

Which doctrine is very requisite for vs vnto constancie. Those which are teachers cannot do their dutie as they ought, but they must set themselves against the contemners of God. And forasmuch as there are alwayes some wicked men, which set light by the maiestie of God, they must euer now and then, haue recourse vnto this vehemencie of Steuen. For they may not winke, when Gods honour is taken from him. And what shalbe the end therof? Their vngodlines shalbe the more incensed, so that we shall seeme to powre oyle into the fire (as they say). But whatsoever come of it, yet must we not spare the wicked, but wee must keepe them downe mightilie: although they could powre out all the furies of hel. And it is certaine that those which will flatter the wicked, doe not respect the frute, but are faint hearted through feare of daunger. But as for vs, howsoever we haue no such successe as we could wish, let vs know that courage in defending the doctrine of godlinesse, is a sweet smelling sacrifice to God.

55 *Forasmuch as he was full.* We cannot almost expresse into what straites the seruant of Christ was brought, when hee saw himselfe beset rounde with raging enemies: the goodnesse of his cause was oppressed, partly with false accusations and malice, partly with violence and outrageous outcries: he was inuironned with sterne countenauces on euery side: he himselfe was hailed vnto a cruell and horrible kinde of death, he could espie succour and ease no where. Therefore being thus destitute of mans helpe, he turneth him selfe to warde God. We must first note this, that Steuen did looke vnto God, who is the iudge of life and death, (turning his eyes from beholding the world) when he was brought into extreeme despaire of all thinges, whiles that there is nothing but death before his eyes. That done, we must also adde this, that his expectation was not in vaine, because Christ appeared to him by and by. Although Luke doth signifie, that he was now armed with such power of the Spirit, as could not be ouercome, so that nothing could hinder him from beholding the heauens. Therefore Steuen looketh vp toward heauen, that he may gather courage by beholding Christ, that dying he may triumphe gloriously, hauing ouercom death. But as for vs, it is no maruel if Christ doe not shew himself to vs, because we are so set & tyed vpon the earth. Hereby it cometh to passe, that our harts faile vs at euery light rumor of danger, and euen at the falling of a leafe. And that for good causes, for where is our strength but in Christ? But we passe ouer the heauens, as if we had no helpe any where els, saue only in the world. Furthermore this vice can be redressed by no other meanes, then if God lift vs vp by his Spirit being naturally set vpon the earth. Therefore Luke assigneth this cause, why Steuen looked vp stedfastly toward heauen: because he was full of the spirite. We must also ascend into heauen hauing this spirite to be our director and guid, so often as we are oppressed with troubles. And surely vntill such time as he illuminate vs, our eyes are not so quicke of sight, that they can come vnto heauen. Yea the eyes of the fleshe are so dull, that they cannot ascend into heauen.

Hee saw the glory of God. Luke signifieth as I haue said, that Christ appeared

appeared forthwith to Steuen so soone as he lifted vp his eyes towards heauen. But he telleth vs before, that he had other eyes giuen him than the fleshly eyes, seeing that with the same he flieth vp vnto the glory of God. Whence we must gather a generall comfort, that God will be no lesse present with vs, if forsaking the worlde, all our senses strue to come to him: not that he appeareth vnto vs by any externall vision, as hee did to Steeuen, but he will so reueale himselfe vnto vs within, that wee may in deed feele his presence. And this maner of seeing ought to be sufficient for vs, when God doth not only by his power and grace declare that he is nigh at hand, but doth also proue that hee dwelleth in vs.

§6 *Behold I see the heauens.* God ment not only priuately to prouide for his seruant, but also to wring and torment his enemies: as Steeuen doth couragiously triumph ouer them, when he affirmeth plainly that he saw a myracle. And here may a question be moued, how the heauens were opened. For mine owne part, I think that there was nothing changed in the nature of the heauens: but that Steeuen had new quicknesse of sight graunted him, which pearced through all lets euen vnto the inuisible glory of the kingdome of heauen. For admit we graunt, that there was some diuision or parting made in heauen, yet mans eye could neuer reach so farre. Againe, Steeuen alone did see the glory of God. For that spectacle was not only hid frō the wicked, who stood in the same place, but they were also so blinded within themselues, that they did not see the manifest truth. Therefore hee saith, that the heauens are opened to him in this respect, because nothing keepeth him from beholding the glory of God. Whereupō it foloweth that the myracle was not wrought in heauen, but in his eyes. Wherefore there is no cause, why we should dispute long about any naturall vision: because it is certaine that Christ appeared vnto him not after some naturall maner, but after a new & singular sort. And I pray you of what colour was the glory of GOD, that it could be seen naturally with the eyes of the flesh? Therefore wee must imagine nothing in this vision, but that which is diuine. Moreouer, this is worth the noting, that the glory of God appeared not vnto Steeuen wholly as it was, but according to mans capacitie. For that infinitenesse cannot be comprehended with the measure of any creature.

The sonne of man standing. Hee seeth Christe reigning in that fleshe, wherein he was abased: so that in very deed the victorie did consist in this one thing. Therefore it is not superfluous, in that Christ appeareth vnto him, and for this cause doth he also call him the sonne of man, as if hee shoulde say, I see that man, whom yee thought yee had quite extinguished by death, enjoying the gouernment of heauen: therefore gnash with your teeth as much as you list: there is no cause why I shoulde feare to fight for him euen vnto blood, who shall not only defend his own cause, but my saluation also. Notwithstanding here may a question be moued, why he saw him standing, who is said elswhere to sit. Augustine as hee is sometimes more subtil than needes, saith, that hee sitteth as a iudge, that hee stood then as an aduocate. For mine owne part I thinke that though these speeches be diuers, yet they signifie both one thing. For

neither sitting, ne yet standing noteth out, how the body of Christ was framed: but this is referred vnto his power & kingdome. For where shal wee erect him a throne, that hee may sit at the right hande of God the Father: seeing God doth fill all things in such sort, that wee ought to y-magine no place for his right hand? Therefore the whole text is a Metaphor, when Christ is said to sit or stande at the right hande of God the Father, and the plaine meaning is this, that Christ hath all power giuen him, that he may raigne in his Fathers steede in that flesh wherein hee was humbled, and that he may be next him. And although this power be spread abroad through heauen and earth; yet some men imagine amisse, that Christe is euery where in his humane nature. For though he be contained in a certaine place, yet that hindereth no whit, but that he may and doth shewe foorth his power throughout all the whole world. Therefore, if wee bee desirous to feele him present by the working of his grace, we must seeke him in heauen: as he reuealed himselfe vnto Steeuen there. Also some men doe affirme ridiculously out of this place, that he drew nere vnto Steeuen that hee might see him. For wee haue already saide that Steeuen his eyes were so lifted vp by the power of the Spirit, that no distance of place coulde hinder the same. I confesse indeed that speaking properly, that is, philosophically, there is no place aboue the heauens. But this is sufficient for mee, that it is peruers doting to place Christe any where els, saue only in heauen, and aboue the elements of the world.

57 *Crying with a loude voice.* This was either a vaine shew of zeale, as hypocrites are almost alwayes pricked forward with ambition, to breake out into immoderate heate: as Caiphas when hee heard Christe say thus, After this yee shal see the sonne of man &c. did rent his clothes in token of indignation, as if it were intollerable blasphemie: or els certainly the preaching of the glory of Christe was vnto them such a torment, that they must needs burst through madnesse. And I am rather of this minde: for Luke saith afterward, that they were carried violently as those men which haue no hold of themselves, vs to leape out immoderately.

58 *They stoned.* God had appointed this kinde of punishment in the lawe, for false Prophetes: as it is written in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomie: but God doth also define there, who ought to be reckoned in that number: to wit, he which doth attempt to bring the people vnto strange Goddes, therefore the stoning of Steeuen was both vniust and also wicked, because he was vniustly condemned. So that the martyrs of Christe must suffer like punishment with the wicked. It is the cause alone which maketh the difference: but this difference is so highly esteemed before God and his angels, that the rebukes of the martyrs doe far excell al glory of the worlde. Yet here may a question bee moued, How it was lawfull for the Iewes to stone Steeuen who had not the gouernment in their hands. For in Christs cause they answere, It is not lawfull for vs to put any man to death. I answere, that they did this violently and in an vproare. And whereas the president did not punish this wickednesse, it may

it may be that he winked at many things, least he should bring that hatred vpon his owne head which they bare against the name of Christe. Wee see that the Romane presidentes did chiefly winke at the ciuill discordes of that nation euen of set purpose: that when one of them had murthered another, they might the sooner be ouercome afterward.

And the witnesses laide downe their cloathes at a young mans feete, named Saul.

59 *And they stoned Steeuen, calling on, and saying: Lord Iesus, receiue my spirit.*

60 *And he kneeled downe, and cryed with a loude voyce: Lord, lay not this sinne to their charge. And when he had said thus, he fell on sleepe.*

61 *And Saul consented to his death.*

And the witnesses. Luke signifieth that euen in that tumult they obserued some shewe of iudgement. This was not commaunded in vaine that the witnesses shoulde throwe the first stone: because seeing they must committe the murther with their owne handes, many are holden with a certaine dread, who otherwise are lesse afraide to cut the throtes of the innocent with periurie of the tongue. But in the meane season we gather how blinde and madde the vngodlinesse of these witnesses was, who are not afraide to imbrue their bloodie handes with the blood of an innocent, who had already committed murther with their tongues. Whereas hee saith, that their cloathes were laid downe at the feete of Saul, he sheweth that there was no let in him, but that beeing cast into a reprobate sence, he might haue perished with the rest. For who would not thinke that he was desperate, who had infected his youth with such crueltie? Neither is his age expresse to lessen his fault, as some vnskillfull men goe about to prooue: for he was of those yeeres, that want of knowledge coulde no whit excuse him. And Luke will shortly after declare, that he was sent by the high Priest to persecute the faithfull. Therefore he was no childe, he might well be counted a man. Why then is his youth mentioned? That euery man may consider with him selfe, what great hurt he might haue done in Gods Church, vnlesse Christe hadde brideled him betimes. And therin appeareth a most notable token both of Gods power, and also of his grace, in that he tamed a fierce and wilde beast in his chiefe furie, euen in a moment, and in that he extolled a miserable murtherer so highly, who through his wickednesse was drowned almost in the deepe pit of hell.

59 *Calling on.* Because he had vttered wordes enough before men though in vaine, he turneth himselfe now vnto God for good causes, and armeth himselfe with prayer to suffer all things. For although we haue need to run vnto Gods help euerie minute as an houre during our whole warfare, yet we haue greatest need to call vpon God in the last conflict which is the hardest.

And Luke expresseth again how furious mad they were: because their

crueltie was not aswaged euen when they saw the seruāt of Christ praying humbly. Furthermore, here is set downie a prayer of Steeuen hauing two members. In the former member where he commendeth his spirite to Christ, he sheweth the constancie of his faith. In the other, where he prayeth for his enemies, he testifieth his loue toward men. Forasmuch as the whole perfection of godlinesse consisteth vpon these two partes, we haue in the death of Steeuen a rare example of a godly & holy death. It is to be thought that he vsed many mo words, but the summe tendeth to this end.

Lord Iesu. I haue already said, that this prayer was a witness of confidence: and surely the couragiousnesse and valiauntnesse of Steeuen was great, that when as he saw the stones flie about his eares, wherewith he should be stoned by and by, when as he heareth cruell curses and reproches against his head, hee yet stayeth himselfe meekely vpon the grace of Christ. In like sort the Lord wil haue his seruants to be brought to nought as it were sometimes, to the end their saluation may bee the more wonderfull. And let vs define this saluation not by the vnderstanding of our flesh but by faith. Wee see how Steeuen leaneth not vnto the iudgement of the flesh, but rather assuring himselfe euen in very destruction that he shalbe saued, he suffereth death with a quiet mind. For vndoubtedly he was assured of this, that our life is hid with Christe in God.

Col. 3. 3.

Psal. 31. 6.

Therefore casting off all care of the bodie, hee is content to commit his soule into the handes of Christe. For hee could not pray thus from his heart, vnlesse hauing forgotten this life, he had cast of all care of the same. It behoueth vs with Dauid to commit our soules into the handes of God daylie, so long as we are in the worlde, because we are inuironed with a thousand deaths: that God may deliuer our life from all dangers: but when we must die in deed, and we are called thereunto, we must flie vnto this prayer, that Christe will receiue our spirite. For hee commended his owne Spirite into the handes of his Father, to this end that hee may keepe ours for euer. This is an vnestimable comfort, in that wee knowe our soules doe not wander vpe and downe when they flit out of our bodies, but that Christ receiue them, that hee may keepe them faithfully, if wee commend them into his handes. This hope ought to encourage vs to suffer death patiently. Yea whosoeuer commendeth his soule to Christ with an earnest affection of faith, he must needes resigne himselfe wholly to his pleasure and will. And this place doth plainelie testifie that the soule of man is no vaine blast, which vanisheth away, as some frantike fellowes imagine dotingly, but that it is an Essentiall spirite, which liueth after this life. Furthermore wee are taught hereby, that we call vpon Christ rightly and lawfully, because all power is giuen him of the Father for this cause, that all men may commit themselues to his tuition.

60. *Kneeling down, he cried.* This is the other part of his prayer, wherein he ioyneth the loue of men with faith in Christ: and surely if we desire to be gathered to Christ for our saluation, we must put on this affection.

Whereas

Whereas Steeuen prayeth for his enemies, and those most deadly, and euen in the very instant, whē their crueltie might prouoke him vnto desire of reuenge, he declareth sufficiently what affection hee beareth toward all other men. And we know that we are all commanded to do the same which Steeuen did: but because there is nothing more hard than so to forgiue iniuries, that we will wish wel to those who would haue vs vndone, therefore we must alwaies set Steeuen before our eyes for an example. He crieth in deed with a loud voice, but he maketh shew of nothing before men, which was not spoken sincerely and from the heart, as God himselfe doth witnesse. Yet he cryeth aloud, that he may omit nothing which might serue to assuage the cueltie of the enemies. The fruite appeared not forthwith, yet vndoubtedly he prayed not in vaine: & Paule is vnto vs a sufficient testimonie, that this sinne was not laide to all their charges. I will not say as Augustin, that vnlesse Steeuen had praised, the church should not haue had Paul: for this is somewhat hard: only I say this, that whereas God pardoned Paul, it appeareth thereby, that Steeuen his prayer was not in vaine. Here ariseth a question, How Steeuen prayeth for those, which he said of late, did resist the holy ghost. but this seemeth to be the sinne against the Spirit, which shall neuer be forgiuen. We may easily answer, that that is pronounced generally of all, which belógeth to many euery where. Therefore he called not the body of the people rebellious in such sort, that he exempted none: againe I haue declared before, what manner of resisting hee condemned in that place: for it followeth not by and by that they sin against the holy ghost, who resist him for a time. When he prayeth, that God will not lay the sinne to their charge, his meaning is, that the guiltines may not remain in them.

And when hee had said thus, hee fell on sleepe. This was added that wee may knowe that these wordes were vttered euen when he was readie to yeeld vppē the Ghoste, which is a token of wonderfull constancie: also this word *sleepe* noteth a meeke kind of death. Nowe because hee made this prayer when he was at the point of death, hee was not moued with any hope of obtaining pardon, to bee so careful to appease his enemies: but only that they might repent. When this worde *sleepe* is taken in the scripture for to die, it must bee referred vnto the bodie: least any man imagine foolishly with vnlearned men, that the soules doe also sleepe.

CHAP. VIII.

- A**ND at that day there was great persecution raised against the church which was at Ierusalem. Therefore they were all scattered abroad throughout all regions of Iudea, and Samaria, except the Apostles.
- And religious menne dressed Steeuen together, and they mourned sore for him.
- But Saul made hauocke of the church, and entring into houses, and drawing thence men and women, he cast them into prison.

4 And they being dispersed, did goe about preaching the worde of God.

Psal. 43. 32. 1 In this historie wee may first see the state of the godly in this worlde: to wit, that they are like sheepe appointed to be slaine, as it is in the Psalme: and especially when the Lorde letteth loose the bridle to his enemies, that they may put that crueltie in execution which they haue in minde conceiued. Secondly, here is set down the ende of persecutions: to wit, that they are so faire from breaking off the course of the Gospell, that they are rather made helpees to further the same, through the wonderfull counsell of God. Like as it was a manifest myracle, that the scattering abroad, mentioned by Luke, gathered many vnto the vnitie of faith, who were estraunged from God before. Now let vs consider euery thing in order.

At that day. The persecution began at Steeuen: after that when their madnesse was thereby set on fire, it waxed hot against all both one & other. For the wicked are like brute beastes, for when they haue once tasted blood, they are more desirous thereof, and become more cruel thorough committing murder. For Satā who is the father of all crueltie, doeth first take from them all feeling of humanitie, when they are once imbrued with innocent blood: that done he stirreth vp in them an vnquenchable thirsting after blood: whence those violent assaults to commit murder, come: so that when they haue once begun, they wil neuer make an end, with their will. Moreouer, when they haue power once graunted the to doe hurt, their boldnesse increaseth in tract of time, so that they are caried headlong more immoderately, which thing Luke also noteth when he saith, The persecution was great. Vndoubtedly the church had but smal rest before, neither was it free from the vexatio of the wicked, but the Lord spared his for a time, that they might haue some libertie: & now they began to be sorer set on. These thinges must be applyed vnto our time also. If the furiousnesse of our enemies seeme at any time to be as it were fallen on sleepe, so that it casteth not out flames farre: let vs knowe that the Lorde prouideth for our weaknesse: yet let vs not in the meane season imagine that we shall haue continuall truce, but let vs bee in readinesse to suffer sorer brutes, as often as they shall breake out suddenly. Let vs also remember, that if at any time the constancie of one man haue whetted the crueltie of our enemies, the blame of the euill is vniustly ascribed to him. For Luke doth not defame Steeuen, when as he saith, that by meanes of him the church was sorer vexed than before: but he rather turneth this to his praise, because he did valiauntly as the Standard-bearer encourage others with his example, to fight courageously. When he calleth it the church which was at Ierusalē, his meaning is not, that there were churches elsewhere, but he passeth ouer vnto these things which ensued thereupon. For whereas there was but this one only body of the godly in al the world, it was rent in peeces through flight: yet there sprang vp more churches by and by of those lame members, which were dispersed heere and there, and so the body of Christe was spread abroad farre and wide, whereas it was before shut vp within the walles

walles of Ierusalem.

They were all scattered abroad. It is certain that they were not all scattered abroad, but the scripture vseth an vniuersall note, for that which we say, Euery where, or abroad. The summe is this, that not only a few were in danger: because the crueltie of the enemies raged throughout the whole church. Many doe oftentimes take themselues to their feete, through faintnesse of heart, euen when they heare any light rumour, but these are in another case. For they fled not vnaduisedly beeing discouraged, but because they sawe no other meanes to pacifie the furie of the aduersaries. And he saith that they were scattered not only through diuers places of Iudea, but that they came euen vnto Samaria: so that the middle wall began to be pulled down, which made diuision between the Iewes and the Gentiles. For the conuersion of Samaria, was as it were the first frutes of the calling of the Gentiles. For although they had circumcision as had the people of God, yet wee know that there was great dissention, and that not without great cause, forasmuche as they had in Samaria only a forged worship of god, as Christ affirmeth, because it was only an vsauerie emulation. Therefore God set open the gate for the gospel then, that the scepter of Christ sent out of Ierusalem, might come vnto the Gentiles. He exempteth the Apostles out of this number, not that they were free from the common daunger: but because it is the dutie of a good pastour, to set him selfe against the inuasions of wolues, for the safetie of his flocke. But here may a question bee asked, forasmuch as they were commaunded to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world, why they stayed at Ierusalem; euen when they were expelled thence with force and hand? I answer, that seeing Christe had commaunded them to begin at Ierusalem, they employed themselues there, vntill such time as beeing brought into some other place by his hand, they might knowe for a suretie that he was their guide. And wee see how fearefully they proceeded to preache the Gospell: not that they foreslowed that function which was inioyned them: but because they were amased at a newe and vnwonted thing.

Ephc. 2. 14.

Mark. 16. 16

Therefore seeing they see the Gospell so mightily resisted at Ierusalem, they dare goe to no other place, vntill such time as they haue broke that first huge heape of straites. Assuredly they prouide neither for their case, ne yet for their owne commodities, eyther for beeing voide of care, by staying at Ierusalem: for they haue a painefull charge: they are continually amidst diuers daungers, they encounter with great troubles: wherfore vndoubtedly they are purposed to do their dutie. And especially, wheras they stand to it, when all the rest flie, that is an euident testimonie of valiant constancie. If any man object, that they might haue diuided the Prouinces amongst them, that they might not all haue been occupied in one place: I answer, that Ierusalem alone had busines enough for them all.

In sum; Luke reckoneth vp this as a thing worthie of prayse, that they followed not the rest into voluntarie exile, to auoid persecution: and yet he doth not reprehend the flight of those men, whose state was more free.

For the Apostles did consider what particular thing their calling hadde: to wit, that they should keepe their standing, seeing the wolues did inuade the sheepefolde. The rigour of Tertullian and such like was too great, who did deny indifferently that it is lawful to flie for fear of persecution. August. saith better, who giueth leaue to flie in such sort that the churches beeing destitute of theyr Pastours, bee not betrayed into the hands of the enemies.

This is surely the best moderation, which beareth neither too much with the flesh, neither driueth those headlong to death, who may lawfully saue their liues. Let him that is disposed read the 180. Ep. to Honoratus. That I may returne to the Apostles, if they had been scattered here and there with feare of persecution, euen at the beginning, all men might haue rightly called them hirelings. How hurtfull and filthie had the forsaking of the place bin, at the present time? how greatly wold it haue discouraged the mindes of all men? What great hurt should they haue done with their example among the posteritie? It shall sometimes so fall out in deede, that the pastour may also flie: that is, if they inuade him alone, if the laying waste of the church be not feared, if hee bee absent. But and if both his flocke and hee haue to encounter with the aduersarie, hee is a treacherous forsaker of his office, if hee stande not stoutlye to it euen vntill the end. Priuate persons haue greater libertie.

2 *They dressed Steeuen.* Luke sheweth that euen in the heat of persecution, the godly were not so discouraged, but beeing alwayes zealous, they did those dueties which did belong to godlinesse. Buriall seemeth to be a matter of small importance: rather than they will foreflove the same, they bring themselves in no small hassle of life. And as the circumstance of time doth declare that they contemned death valiantly: so againe wee gather thereby that they were careful to doe this thing not without great and vrgent cause. For this serued greatly to exercise their faith, that the bodie of the holy martyr should not bee left to the wilde beastes, in whom Christe had triumphed nobly according to the glory of his Gospel. Neither could they liue to Christ, vnlesse they were readie to be gathered vnto Steeuen into the societie of death. Therefore the care they had to burie the martyr, was vnto them a meditation vnto inuincible constancie of professing the faith. Therefore they sought not in a superfluous matter with an vnaduised zeale to prouoke their aduersaries. Although that generall reason which ought alwayes and euerie where to be of force amongst the godly, was vndoubtedly of great weight with them. For the rite of burying doth appertaine vnto the hope of the resurrection, as it was ordained by God since the beginning of the world to this end.

Wherefore this was alwayes counted cruell Barbarisme, to suffer bodies to lie vnburied willingly. Profane men did not know why they should count the right of buriall so holy: but wee are not ignorant of the end thereof: to wit, that those which remaine aliue may know, that the bodies are committed to the earth as to a prison, vntil they be raised vp thence.

Where

Whereby it appeareth that this duty is profitable rather for those which are aliuē, than for those which are deade. Although it is also a point of our humanitie, to giue due honour to those bodies to which wee knowe blessed immortallitie to be promised.

They made great lamentation. Luke doth also commend their profession of godlinesse and faith in their lamentation. For a dolefull and vnprosperous ende causeth men for the most part to forsake those causes wherein they were delighted before. But on the other side these men declare by their mourning, that they are no whit terrified with the death of Stephen, from standing stoutly in the approbation of their cause: considering therewithal what great losse Gods church suffered by the death of one man. And we must reiect that foolish Philosophie, which willett me to be altogether blockish, that they may lie wise. It must needs be that the Stoicks were void of comon sense, who would haue a man to be without all affection. Certaine mad fellowes would gladly bring in the same doings into the Church at this day, and yet notwithstanding although they require an heart of yron of other men; there is nothing softer or more effeminate than they. They cannot abide that other men should shedde one teare: if any thing fall out otherwise than they would wish, they make no end of mourning. God doth thus punish their arrogancy iestingly (that I may so terme it) seeing that he setteth them to be laught at euen by boyes. But let vs know that those affections which God hath giuen to mans nature, are of themselves no more corrupt, than the author himselfe: but that they are first to bee esteemed according to the cause: secondly if they keepe a meane and moderation. Surely that man which denieth that wee ought to reioice ouer the giftes of God, is more like a blocke than a man: therefore wee may no lesse lawfully sorowe when they be taken away. And least I passe the compasse of this present place, Paule doeth not altogether forbidde men mourning, when any of their friends is taken away by death, but he would haue a difference betweene them and the vnbeleeuers: because hope ought to bee to them a comfort, and a remedie against vnpatience. For the beginning of death causeth vs to sorrow for good causes: but because we knowe that we haue life restored to vs in Christ, we haue that which is sufficient to appease our sorrowe. In like sort when wee are sorie that the Church is deprived of rare and excellent men, there is good cause of sorrow: onely we must seek such comfort as may correct exccesse.

3 *But Saul.* Wee must note two thinges in this place, howe greates the cruelty of the aduersaries was, and howe wonderfull the goodnesse of God was, who vouchsafed to make Paul a Pastour of so cruel a wolfe. For that desire to lay wast the Church wherewith he was incensed, did seeme to cut away all hope. Therefore his conuersion was so much the more excellent afterward. And it is not to bee doubted but that this punishment was laid vpon him by God, after that he had conspired to put Stephen to death together with the other wicked men, that he should be the ringleader of crueltie. For God doeth oftentimes punish sinnes more sharply in the Elect than in the reprobate.

And they were scattered abroad. Luke declareth in this place also, that it came to passe by the wonderful prouidence of God, that the scattering abroad of the faithfull, should bring many vnto the vnitie of faith: thus doth the Lord vse to bring light out of darknes, & life out of death. For the voice of the Gospel which was heard heretofore in one place onely, doth now sound euerywhere: in the meane season we are taught by this example, that we must not yeeld vnto persecutions: but rather be encouraged vnto valiantnes. For when the faithfull flie from Ierusalem, they are not afterwarde discouraged either with exile, or with their present miseries, or with any feare, that they degenerate vnto slouthfulnes: but they are as ready to preach Christ euē in the midst of their calamitie, as if they had neuer suffered any trouble. Moreouer Luke seemeth to note that they leade a wandering life, in that they changed their lodgings often. Therefore if we desire to be counted their brethren, let vs pricke forward our selues so diligently, that no feare or bitterness of crosse discourage vs, but that wee goe forward in shewing forth the profession of faith: and that we neuer be weary of furthering the doctrine of Christ. For it is an absurde thing that exile and flight which are the first exercises of martyrdom, shoulde make vs dumbe and fainehearted.

- 5 And when Philip came into the citie of Samaria, he preached Christ to them.
- 6 And the multitude gaue eare to those things which Philip spake, hearing with one consent, and seeing the signes which he shewed.
- 7 For where as many were possessed with vnclane spirits, they came out crying with a lowde voyce. And many that had the palsey, and which were lame, were healed.
- 8 So that there was great ioy in that citie.
- 9 And a man named Simon, had beene before in the citie, exercising the art magike, and bewitching the people of Samaria: saying, that he was some great man.
- 10 To whom they all gaue heed both small and great, saying: This man is the great power of God.
- 11 And they had giuen heed vnto him, because they had beene bewitched long time with his witchcraft.
- 12 But as soon as they beleened Philip preaching concerning the kingdome of God, and in the name of Iesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.
- 13 And Simon himselfe beleened, and being baptized, did cleaue to Philip: and when hee sawe the signes and great powers which were done, hee wondred.

5 Luke saide that they all preached the word of God, now he maketh mention of Philip alone, both because his preaching was more fruitfull and effectuall than the preaching of the rest, and also because there followed notable histories, which he will adde afterwarde. Hee put the citie of Samaria, for the citie Samaria, which was laide waste by Hircanus,

canus, and built againe by Herod, and called Schaste. Reade Iosephus in his thirteenth and fiftenth bookes of Antiquities. When hee saith that Philip preached Christ, hee signifieth that the whole summe of the Gospel is contained in Christ. The other speech which he vseth shortly after, is more perfect: yet it is al one in effect. Hee ioyneth the kingdom of God and the name of Christ together: but because we obtaine this goodnesse through Christ, to haue God to reigne in vs, and to lead an heauenly life, being renewed into spirituall righteousnesse, and dead to the worlde, therefore the preaching of Christ containeth this point also vnder it. But the summe is this, that Christ doeth repaire with his grace the worlde, being destroyed, which commeth to passe when hee reconcileth vs to the father: secondly when hee regenerateth vs by his spirite, that the kingdom of God may be erected in vs, when Satan is put to flight. Moreouer whereas he declared before, that the Apostles did not stirre one foote from Ierusalem, it is to be thought that he speaketh of one of the seauen Deacons, in this place, whose daughters did also prophetic.

6 And the multitude gave eare. Luke declareth howe the Samaritans did embrace Philips doctrine. For hee saith that they hearde, whereby they tooke some taste: there was also another pricke whereby they were pricked forward, and that was myracles: at length there followed attentiuenesse. This is the right going forward vnto faith. For those which refuse that doctrine which they haue not heard: howe is it possible that they shoulde euer come vnto faith, which commeth by hearing? Therefore where as they were readie to heare, that was the first steppe vnto reuerence and attentiuenesse. And therefore it is no maruel, if faith bee so rare and almost none in the world: for howe manie bee there which vouchsafe to hearken when God speaketh? Whereby it commeth to passe that the more part reiecteth the truth before they knowe the same, and haue not so much as lightlie tasted it. And as hearing is the beginning of faith: so it shoulde not be sufficient of it selfe, vnlesse the maiestic of doctrine shoulde also moue the heartes. And surely whosoever considereth that he hath to doe with God, cannot heare him contemptuously when hee speaketh: and the verie doctrine which is contained in his worde, shall purchase authoritie for it selfe: so that attentiuenesse shall flowe of it selfe from hearing. As touching myracles wee knowe that there is a double vse thereof: they serue to prepare vs to heare the Gospel: and to confirme vs in the faith thereof. The aduerbe with *one accord*, may be ioyned as wel with hearing, as with attentiuenesse. This latter doth like mee better, that they were attentiu with one accord. And therein doth Luke commend the force and efficacie of Philips preaching, because a great number of men was sodainly wonne to heare attentiuely with one consent.

Rom. 10. 14.

7 Vncleane Spirites. Hee toucheth certaine kindes briefly, that wee may knowe with what myracles they were brought, to attribute any authoritie

authoritie to Philip. That crying wherewith the vncleane spirites cried, was a token of resistance. Wherefore this serued not a little to set forth the power of Christ, that hee did binde the diuils with his commaundement though they resisted stubbornly.

8 *The ioy*; whereof he speaketh, is a fruit of faith. For it cannot be but that so soone as we know that God will be fauourable and mercifull, our minds shalbe rapt with incomparable ioy, and such as doeth farre passe Philip. 4. 7. all vnderstanding.

9 *A certaine man named Simon.* This was such a let, that it might seem that the Gospel coulde haue no passage to come vnto the Samaritans. For the mindes of them all were bewitched with Simons iuglings. And this amasednesse was growne to some strength by reason of long space of time. Furthermore experience teacheth what a harde matter it is to pluck that error out of the mindes of mē, which hath taken root through long continuance, and to call them backe vnto a sound and right mind, who are already hardened. Superstition made them more obstinate in their error, because they counted Simon not onely as a Prophet of God, but euen as the spirit of God.

10 For the surname *great power*, tended to this end, that whatsoeuer should otherwise be diuine, might wax vile through this greatnes. Therefore the power of Christ appeareth hereby more plainely, in that Philip brake through these lets. Which thing Luke amplifieth.

11 When hee saith, that *they were astonyed* from the least to the greatest. For seeing all men of what estate so euer they were, were deluded, what entrance coulde the Gospel haue: especially sythence it was no meane seducing? For all their senses were besotted. And besides that we see thereby how mightie the truth is, there is also set before vs an example of constancie in Philip: who though he see no way, yet doeth hee set hand to the Lords worke with a valiant courage, waiting for the successe which God should giue. And thus must we do, we must valiantly attempt whatsoeuer the Lorde commaundeth, euen when our indeuours seeme to be vaine. Furthermore whereas Sathan did bewitch the Samaritans: let vs know that it is the common punishment of infidelitie. Al men are not bewitched in deede with the iuglings of inchaunters, neither are there Simons euery where, which can so seduce and deceiue: but my meaning is, that it is no wonder, if Sathan do mocke men diuersly in the darke. For they are subiect to all errors whosoever are not gouerned by the Spirit of God. Furthermore when Luke saith that they were all seduced one with another: we are taught that neither wit, neither all that reason and wisdom which we haue, are sufficient to auoid the craftinesse of Sathan withall. And surely wee see in what foolish and dotting errors they were intangled, who were counted in the world wiser than others.

The great power of God. Therefore, Sathan abused the name of God to deceiue: which is the most pestilent kind of deceiuing, so farre is it from being any excuse. It hath beene saide before, that Simon did take to him selfe the name of the principall power of God, that he might suppress
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and surpasse whatsoeuer was elsewhere diuine: as the sunne darkneth all the starres with his light. This was wicked and vngodly prophaning of the name of God. But wee reade of nothing which was done heere; which is not done as yet dayly. For men are bent to nothing more than to translate that to Sathan, which is proper to God. They pretend religion, but what did this pretence helpe the Samaritans? Therefore it goeth well with vs when God setteth forth to vs his power in Christ, and declareth therewith that we must not seeke the same any where else: & doth discover the sleights and iugling casts of Satan which wee must auoid, to the end he may keepe vs still in himselfe.

12 *When they had beleued.* That is the myracle whereof I spake; because they hearde Philip, who were altogether made astonied with the illusions of Simon: in that they were made partakers of the heauenlie wisdom who were blockish & dull. So that they were after a sort brought from hell to heauen. Whereas Baptisme followed faith, it agreeth with Christs institution, as concerning strangers and those which were without. For it was meete that they should be engrafted into the body of the church, before they should receiue the signe: but the Anabaptists are too foolish, whiles they endeouour to prone by these places; that infants are not to be baptised. Men and women could not be baptised without making confession of their faieith: but they were admitted vnto baptisme vpon this condition, that their families might be consecrated to God: for the couenant goeth thus: I will bee thy God, and the God of thy seede.

Mark. 16. 47

Gen. 17. 7.

13 *Simon also himselfe.* Hee which had besotted the whole citie with his witcherie, receiueth the truth together with others. Hee which had boasted himselfe to be the principall power of God, submitteth himselfe to God: though he were brought to the knowledge of the Gospel, not so much for his owne sake alone, as for the whole countries sake, that that offence might be taken out of the way, which might haue hindred the vnskilfull. And to this end tendeth that which Luke setteth downe afterward, that he wondred at the signes. For God meant to triumph ouer this man, whom the Samaritans counted a petit God: which commeth to passe whiles he is enforced to giue glorie to the true myracles, after that his vaine boasting is taken away. And yet he giueth not himselfe ouer sincerely to Christ: for then his ambition, and that wicked and prophane account which hee made of the gifts of God, should not breake out. And yet I am not of their minde, who thinke that hee made onely a semblance of faith, seing he did not belecue. Luke saith plainly that hee beleueed, and the reason is added, Because hee was touched with wondering. How then doth he shortly after bewray himselfe to be but an hypocrite? I answer, That there is some meane betweene faith and meere dissimulation. The Epicures and Lucianists doe professe that they beleue, where as notwithstanding they laugh inwardly, whereas the hope of eternall life is vnto them a vaine thing, finally whereas they haue no more godlinesse than dogs and swine. But there be many, who (howsoeuer they be not regenerate with the Spirit of adoption, & do not addict them

themselves vnto God with the true affection of the heart; being ouercome with the power of the word, do not onely confesse that that is true which is taught, but are also touched with some feare of God; so that they receiue doctrine. For they conceiue that God must be heard, that hee is both the author and also the iudge of the world. Therefore they make no semblance of faith before men, which is none, but they thinke that they belecue. And this faith continueth onely for a time, whereof

Mark. 4.
Luk. 8. 13

Christ speaketh in Marke: to wit, when the seede of the Worde conceiued in the minde, is notwithstanding choked forthwith with diuerse cares of the world, or with wicked affections, so that it neuer commeth to any ripenesse, yea rather it groweth out of kinde vnto vnprofitable corne nothing worth. Such therefore was Simons faith: he perceiueeth that the doctrine of the Gospel is true, and he is inforced to receiue the same with the feeling of his conscience; but the groundwork is wanting: that is, the deniall of himselfe. Whereupon it followed that his minde was inwrapped in dissimulation, which he vttereth forthwith. But let vs know that his hypocricie was such, as he deceiued himselfe in: and not that grosse hypocricie whereof Epicures and such like make boast: because they dare not confesse the contempt of God.

He was baptized. It appeareth plainly by this example of Simon, that all men haue not that grace giuen them in Baptisme, which grace is there figured. The opinion of the Papistes is this, That, vnlesse mortall sinne bee the cause of let, all men receiue the truth and effect with the signes. So that they attribute vnto the sacraments magickall force; as if they did profite without faith. But let vs know, that the Lorde offereth to vs by the Sacraments, whatsoeuer the annexed promises do sounde, and that they are not offered in vaine, so that being directed vnto Christ by faith, wee sette from him whatsoeuer the Sacramentes doe promise. And although the receiuing of Baptisme did profite him nothing then, yet if conuersion followed afterwarde, as some men suppose, the profite was not extinguished nor abolished. For it commeth to passe oftentimes that the Spirit of God worketh afterwarde after long time, that the Sacraments may begin to shew forth their force.

Did cleane to Philip. Whereas Philip admitted him into his company, it appeareth thereby how hard a matter it is to knowe hypocrites. And 2. Tim. 4. this is a tryall of our patience. So Denias was a companion of Paule for 10. a time, afterwarde he became an vnfaithfull reuolt. Finallie we cannot escape this euill, but that wicked men and deceitfull will sometimes ioyne themselves vnto vs; and if at any time the wicked creepe craftily into our companie, proude Censors burthen vs vniustly, as if wee were to answer for their misdeeds. Though we must take great heede of facilitie, which causeth the Gospel to be slandered oftentimes; and we must be so much the more vigilant; that wee admit none without great choise; forasmuch as we heare that great men haue bene deceiued. He saith that he was made astonied with the greatnesse of the signes: that we may know that that great power, whereof he boasted, was nothing else but iuggling and smokes. And Luke speaketh not in this place of anie

plaine

plaine wondering, but of a dampe or trance which causeth a man to forget what he doth: the

14 And when the Apostles which were at Ierusalem, had heard: that Samaria had receined the word of God, they sent vnto them Peter and Iohn.

15 Who when they were come downe, they prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Ghost.

16 For he was not as yet come downe vpon any of them: but they were onely bapt-
ized in the name of Christ Iesus.

17. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the holy Ghost.

14 Luke describeth in this place the proceedings of the grace of God in the Samaritans, as hee vseth to enrich the faithfull continually with greater giftes of his Spirite. For we must not thinke, that the Apostles tooke that counsell whereof Luke speaketh, without the instinct of the same God, who had already begunne his worke in Samaria by the hand of Philip. And he vseth his instruments diuersely vnto diuerse parts of his worke, according to his good pleasure: He vsed Philip as an instrument to bring them vnto the faith: nowe he ordaineth Peter and Iohn to be ministers to giue the spirite: And thus doeth he foster the vnitie of his Church, when one helpeth another: and doeth not onely knitte man and man together, but whole Churches also. Hee could haue finished that which hee had begunne by Philip: but to the ende the Samaritans might learne to embrace brotherly fellowshippe with the first Church, hee meant to binde them heere with as with a bande: secondlie hee meant to graunt the Apostles (whom hee had commaunded to preach the Gospell throughout the whole world,) this priuiledge, that they might the better all growe together into one faith of the Gospell. And we knowe that it was otherwise daungerous, least, seeing the Iewes and Samaritans were much vnlike in minde and manners, being so diuided, they shoulde by this meanes diuide Christ: or at least feigne to themselues a newe Church. In the meane season wee see howe carefull the Apostles were to helpe their brethren. For they stay not vntill they be requested, but they take this charge vpon them of their owne accorde. The Apostles doe not this through any distrust, as if they did suspect that Philip did not his duetic so vprightlie as hee ought: but they set too their hande to helpe him in his worke: and Peter and Iohn came not onely to helpe him and to be partakers of his labours, but also to approue the same. Againe Philip is not griued because other men finish that building which hee had begunne, but they one helpe another full gently and faithfullie. And surely it is ambition alone which will not suffer helie fellowshippe and mutuall imparting of duties to enter. Whereas Luke saith that Peter was sent by the rest: wee may heereby gather that hee was not the chiefe ruler ouer his fellowes in office, but did so excell amongst them, that yet notwithstanding he was subiect to, and did obey the bodie.

Which

Which were at Ierusalem. This may carry a double meaning, either that al the Apostles were at Ierusalem then, or that there were certaine resident there, when the rest went hither and thither. And I doe rather allowe this later: for it is to bee thought that they did so deuide themselves, that alwayes some of the number might take vpon them diuerse ambassages, as occasion was offered: that some might stay at Ierusalem, as in the principal standing. Againe it may be, that after euery man had spent some time in his voyage, they were wont to assemble themselves there. It is certaine in deed that that time which they spent at Ierusalem was not spent in idleness: and secondly that they were not tyed to some one place, for as much as Christ had commaunded them to goe ouer all the world.

Mark. 16. 15

15 They prayed. Vndoubtedly they taught first: for we know that they were no dumbe persons: but Luke passeth ouer that which was common to them and Philip; and declareth onely what newe thing the Samaritans had by their comming: to wite, that they had the spirit given them then.

16 But here ariseth a question. For hee saith that they were onely baptized into the name of Christ, and that therefore they had not as yet receiued the holy Ghost. But Baptisme must either be in vaine and without grace, or else it must haue all the force which it hath from the holie Ghost. In Baptisme we are washed from our sinnes: but Paule teacheth that our washing is the worke of the holy Ghost. The water vsed in Baptisme is a signe of the blood of Christ: but Peter saith that it is the Spirit, by whom we are washed with the blood of Christ. Our olde man is crucified in Baptisme; that wee may be raised vp vnto newnesse of life: and whence commeth all this, saue onely from the sanctification of the Spirit? And finally what shall remaine in Baptisme, if it bee separate from the Spirit? Therefore we must not denie but that the Samaritans who had put on Christ in deede in Baptisme, had also his spirit giuen them. And surely Luke speaketh not in this place of the common grace of the Spirit; whereby God doth regenerate vs, that we may be his children, but of those singular gifts, wherewith God would haue certaine indewed at the beginning of the Gospell, to bewtise Christes kingdome. Thus must the words of Iohn be vnderstode, that the disciples had not the spirit giuen them as yet, forasmuch as Christ was yet conuersant in the world: not that they were altogether destitute of the spirit, seeing that they had from the same both faith; and a godly desire to followe Christ, but because they were not furnished with those excellent gifts, wherein appeared afterward greater glory of Christ his kingdome. To conclude, for as much as the Samaritans were already endewed with the spirit of adoption, the excellent graces of the spirit are heaped vpon them; in which God shewed to his Church for a time as it were the visible presence of his spirit, that hee might establish for euer the authoritie of his Gospel, and also testifie that his spirit shall be alwayes the gouernor and director of the faithfull.

Titus 3. 5.

1. Pet. 1. 2.

Rom. 6. 6.

Gal. 3. 27.

They were onely baptized. We must not vnderstand this as spoken contemptuously

remptuously of Baptisme: but Luke his meaning is, that they were onely endewed then with the grace of common adoption & regeneration, which is offered to all the godly in Baptisme. As for this, it was an extraordinary thing, that certaine shoulde haue the giftes of the Spiritie giuen them, which might serue to set foorth the kingdome of Christ and the glorie of the Gospel: for this was the vse thereof, that euetie one might profite the Church, according to the measure of his habilitie. We must note this therefore, because whiles the Papistes will set vp their feigned confirmation, they are not afraide to breake out into this sacrilegious speech, that they are but halfe Christians, vpon whom the hands haue not beene as yet laide. This is not tollerable now, because whereas this was a signe which lasted onely for a time, they made it a continuall law in the Church, as if they had the Spiritie in readinesse to giue to whom soeuer they would. Wee knowe that when the testimonie and pledge of Gods grace is set before vs in vaine and without the thing it selfe, it is too filthy mockerie, but euen they themselues are enforced to graunt, that the Church was bewtified for a time onely with these gifts: Whereupon it followeth that the laying on of hands which the Apostles vsed, had an end when the effect ceased. I omit that, that they added oyle vnto the laying on of hands: but this, as I haue alreadie said, was a point of too great boldnesse, to prescribe a perpetuall lawe to the Church, that that might be a generall sacrament, which was peculiarly vsed amongst the Apostles: that the signe might continue still after that the thing it selfe was ceased. And with this they ioyned detestable blasphemie, because they saide that sinnes were onely forgiven by Baptisme: and that the Spiritie of regeneration is giuen by that rotten oyle, which they presumed to bring in without the worde of God. The scripture doth testifie that we put on Christ in Baptisme, and that we are engraffed into his bodie, that our olde man may be crucified, and we renewed into righteousnesse. These sacrilegious robbers haue translated that to adorne the false visure of their sacrament, which they haue taken from Baptisme: neither was this the inuention of one man onely, but the decree of one Councell, whereof they bable daily in all their schooles.

Mark. 6.13.

Galat. 3.37.

Rom. 6.6.

17 *When they had laid their hands.* The laying on of hands followeth prayers, whereby they testifie that the grace of the Spiritie is not included in the externall ceremonie, which they craue humbly at the hands of another. And yet when they confesse that God is the authour, they neglect not the ceremonie which was deliuered them by God to this vse: and because they vsurpe it not rashly, the effect is also annexed. This is the profire and efficacy of signes, because God worketh in them, and yet he remaineth the only giuer of grace, and distributeth the same according to his good pleasure: but let vs remember, that the laying on of hands was the instrument of God, at such time as he gaue the visible graces of the Spirit to his, and that since that the Church was deprived of such riches, it is onely a vaine visure without any substance.

- 18 And when Simon sawe that the holy Ghost was giuen by the laying on of the Apostles hands, he offered them money.
- 19 Saying: Giue me also this power: that on whom I shall lay my hands, he may receiue the holy Ghost.
- 20 And Peter saide vnto him, Thy money perish with thee: because thou hast thought that the gift of God is obtained with money.
- 21 Thou hast no part nor inheritance in this busines. For thy heart is not right before God.
- 22 Therefore repent of this wickednes, and pray vnto God, if peraduenture the cogitation of thy heart may be forgiven thee.
- 23 For I see that thou art in the gall of bitternes, and in the bonde of vnrightheousnesse.
- 24 And Simon answering, said: Pray yee for me vnto God, that none of these things may happen to me which yee haue said.
- 25 Then when they had testified and spoken the worde of God, they returned to Ierusalem, and they preached the Gospel in manie streetes of the Samari-
tans.

18 And when Simon. Simons hypocrisie is nowe discouered, not because that he had feigned before that he beleued: for when he was conuict, he gaue Christ his hande in earnest, like as many yeelde vnto the Gospel, least they strue against God, but in the meane season they continue like to themselves: whereas the denyall of our selues ought to follow true faith. And this is to mixe Christ with Satan, when doctrine pearceth not vnto the hidden affections of the heart, but the inwarde vncleannes lyeth hidden there. Therefore God wipeth away that false colour nowe in Simon, least by professing the name of Christ, hee deceiue both himselfe and others. For that ambition which was hidden before, breaketh out nowe, when as he desireth to be equall with the Apostles. This is nowe one vice: an other is, because whiles hee thinketh that the grace of God is to be sold, he will get some greedy gaine thereby. Whereby it appeareth that he is a prophane man, and such as had not tasted the first principles of godlinesse: for he is touched with no desire of Gods glory: yea he doth not once think what it is to be a minister of God. As he had heretofore gotten gaine by his magike, so he thought that it would be gaine some, if he might giue the graces of the Spirit. For vndoubtedly he hunted after riches, and sought to purchase praise in the sight of the world: and hee did God great iniury also, because hee thought that this heauenly power did nothing differ from his magicall enchantments. Now we vnderstand briefly what and how many waies Simon offended. In the gifts of the Spirit he doth not adore neither acknowledge the power of Christ: he doeth not confesse that the Apostles were endewed with heauenly power, to set forth Christs glory by their ministerie: his owne ambition driueth and carrieth him headlong, so that hee desireth to become excellent, and to make the worlde subiect to himselfe, setting God apart: he will buy the holy Ghost, as if he could be bought with money.

20 *Peter answered.* Peter giueth him the repulse here stoutly: and being not content to chide him, he addeth a bitter curse or wish, That Simon and his money may perish together. Though he doth not so much wish vnto him destruction, as hee telleth him that the iust vengeance of God hangeth ouer his head, that he might terrifie him. In sum he sheweth what he hath deserued, when he hath made the spirit of God subiect to filthy buying, & selling: as if he should haue said, Thou art worthy to perish with thy money, when thou doest so blaspheme the Spirit of God. For wee may easily gather by that which followeth, that Peter would rather haue had Simon saued than destroyed. But as it were supplying the place of a iudge, he pronounceth what punishment Simon his vngodlinesse deserueth: and it was requisite that he should be thus accused with such vehemencie, that hee might perceiue the greatnes of his offence. To the same end tenderth that, that he iudged his money to perish. For he signifieth that it was as it were infected and polluted with cogitation of wickednes, because it was offered to such a wicked vse. And surely we ought rather to wish that all the whole world perish, than that those things should darken the glory of God, which in comparisn thereof are nothing worth. Whē he wisheth thus to a sacrilegious man, he doth not so much respect the person as the fact. For we must be offended with the offences of mē in such sort, that we must pittie the men themselues. Such are those sentēces of god which adiudge adulterers, theeuēs, drunkards, & wrongfull dealers to destruction. For they do not cut off al hope of saluation from thē, but they are only referred vnto their present estate: and declare what end is prepared for them, if they go forward obstinately.

1. Cor. 6. 9.
Ephes. 5. 5.

21 *Thou hast no part.* Some doe frame this sentence otherwise, that Simon is not partaker of grace, because he setteth a price thereof. But the other reading which we haue followed, is more vsual: to wit, that that reason be ioyned to the former member. And surely it is better to knitte the two sentences together thus, Thy money perish with thee, because thou thinkest that the vnestimable gift of the Spirit can be bought with money. Whereas the old interpreter had put, In this worde: Erasmus translated it more fitly, In this businesse. For Peter his meaning is, that that sacrilegious person hath nothing to doe in all that administration, who doth wickedly prophane the same. Furthermore both the Papistes & also the old diuines haue disputed much concerning Simon: but that which the Papists call simonie, doth not agree with Simons fact. Simon woulde haue bought the grace of the Spirit with money: the Papistes applie the crime of symonie vnto their idle reuenewes. And yet I speake not this, that I may extenuate those horrible sinnes which reigne at this day in popery, in bying & selling spiritual promotions. Now this wickednes is filthy inough of it self, in that they hold such a mart in the Church of God. And in the mean season we must note the true definitiō of symony: to wit, that it is a wicked buying & selling of the gifts of the Spirit, or some other such like thing, whiles that a man abuseth thē vnto ambition or other corruptions. Though I cōfesse that al those imitate Simon, who strue to attain vnto the gouernment of the church by vnlawfull means:

which

which thing we see committed at this day without shame, as if it were lawfull: and wee can scarce finde one Priest in all poperie which is not manifestly a symonaical person in this respect: because none can but vp his heade amongst them, but hee must creepe in by indirect meanes. Although we must confesse, (which thing euen children see, to our great shame,) that this vice is too common euen amongst the false professors of the Gospel. But let vs remember first, to the ende we may be free from the infection of Simon, that the gifts of the Spirit are not gotten with money, but that they are giuen of the free and meere goodnesse of God, and that for the edifying of the Church: that is, that every man may studie to helpe his brethren according to the measure of his habilitie: that every man may bestowe that about the common good of the Church, which he hath receiued: & that the excellencie of no man may hinder, but that Christ may excell all. Notwithstanding it may seeme a maruellous matter, that Peter excludeth Simon from being a partaker of the Spirit, as concerning speciall gifts: because his heart is not right before God. For the wickednes of Iudas did not let him from hauing the gifts of the Spirit in great measure: neither had the giftes of the spirit ben so corrupted amongst the Corinthians, if their heart had ~~beene~~ **been** right in the sight of God. Therefore that reason which Peter alledgeth, seemeth insufficient: because many men excell oftentimes in the gifts of the spirit, who haue an vncleane heart. But first of all there followeth no absurdity, if God giue such graces to men which are vnworthy thereof. secondly Peter prescribeth no general rule in this place, but because the church alone is for the most part made partaker of the gifts of the spirit, he pronounceth that Simon who is a straunger to Christ, is vnworthy to haue the same graces giuen him (which are bestowed vpon the faithful) as if he were one of Gods household. Moreouer he had blasphemed those gifts whereof he is deprived.

22 *Repent therefore.* Whereas he exhorteth him vnto repentance and prayer, hee putteth him in some hope of pardon thereby: for no man shall euer bee touched with anie desire of repentance, saue onely he which shall beleue that God will haue mercie vpon him: on the other side dispaire will alwayes carrie men headloug vnto boldnesse. Furthermore the Scripture teacheth that God is not called vpon a right, saue onely by faith. Therefore wee see howe Peter raiseth vp Simon now, vnto hope of saluation, whom hee had throwne downe before with the cruell lightnings and thunderbolts of wordes: and yet Simon his sinne was no small sinne. But, if it could be, we ought to plucke men euen out of hell. Therefore vntill such time as euen the most wicked men doe by manifest signes bewraie themselues to bee reprobates, no one of them is to bee handled so sharply, but that remission of sinnes is to bee set before him. Yea wee must so deale with those for whom sharpe chiding is profitable by reason of their hardnesse and stubbrenesse, that we throw them downe with one hand, and set them on foote with the other. For the Spirit of God doth not suffer vs to accurse them. But Peter seemeth to bring him into some feare and doubt
when,

when he saith *If peradventure*. And the Papiſts go about to proue by this place and ſuch like, that wee muſt pray with doubtfull mindes : becauſe men may vnaduieſedly promiſe themſelues certaine ſucceſſe in their petitions : but we may readily anſwere them. For the word *ei ara* ſignifieth as much as if a man ſhould ſay, If by any meanes thou maiſt obtain pardon of God. Peter uſeth this word, not that he may leaue Simons mind in a perplexitie, but that he may the more pricke him forward to be earnest in prayer. For the very difficultie doth not a litle ſerue to ſtir vs vp : becauſe when we ſee the thing at hande, wee are too careleſſe and ſluggiſh. Therefore Peter doth not terrifie Simon, that hee may overthrow or trouble all hope of obtaining, in his heart, but putting him in ſure hope, if he ſhall craue pardon humbly and from his heart, he telleth him onely that pardon is harde to be gotten, by reaſon of the greatneſſe of his offence, to the end hee may prouoke him vnto ſeruentneſſe. For it is requiſite that we be lightned by faith when we go vnto God, yea that ſhe be the mother of prayer.

23 *In the gall of bitterneſſe*. Peter doth ſharply reprove Simon againe, and ſtriketh him with Gods iudgement. For vneſſe he had ben compelled to deſcend into himſelfe, he would neuer haue bene turned in good earneſt vnto God. For there is nothing more deadly for men which are blockiſh, than when we flatter them, or when wee doe but a little ſcrape the ſkinne, whereas they ought rather to be thruſt through. Therefore vntill ſuch time as a ſinner ſhall conceiue ſorrowe and true heauineſſe by reaſon of his ſinne, we muſt uſe ſuch ſeueritie as may wounde his minde : otherwiſe the rotten ſore ſhall be nourished within, which ſhall by little and little conſume the man himſelfe. Yet let vs alwayes obſerue this meane, that we prouide for mens ſaluation, ſo much as in vs lieth. Moreouer there bee two excellent fine metaphors in Peters words : the one whereof ſeemeth to bee taken out of Moſes, where hee forbiddeth that there bee not in vs any roote, from which ſpringeth gal and wormwood. Deut. 29. By which ſpeech is noted the inward wickedneſſe of the hart : when as it hath ſo conceiued the poyſon of vngodlineſſe, that being therewith infeſted, it can bring forth nothing but bitterneſſe. To the ſame ende tendeth the binding of iniquitie : to wit, when the whole hart is kept bound and tyed by Satan. For it falleth out ſometimes, that men which are otherwiſe giuen very godly, do breake out into euill works, who haue not their heart corrupt inwardly with poyſon. We know that hypocriſie is ingendred in mans nature : but when as the Spirit of God doth ſhine, we are not ſo blinded in our vices, that we nourish them within as if it were ſome hidden bundle. Therefore Peter his meaning is, that Simon fel not onely in one point, but that his very heart roote was corrupt and bitter : that he fell into Satans ſnares not onely in one kinde of ſin, but that all his ſenſes were inſnared, ſo that he was wholly giuen ouer to Satan, and was become the bondſlaue of iniquitie. In the meane ſeaſon wee are taught, that the greatneſſe of offences is eſteemed not ſo much according to the fact which appeareth, as according to the affection of the heart.

24 *Simon answered.* Hereby wee gather, that hee did not so take that which Peter had threatned vnto him, but that hee did consider that his saluation was sought. And though Peter alone spake, yet he attributerh the speech vnto al, by reason of the consent. Now ariseth a question what we ought to thinke of Simon. The Scripture carrieth vs no farther, saue onely vnto a coniecture. Whereas he yeeldeth when he is reprobued, and being touched with the feeling of his sin, feareth the iudgement of god: and that done, flieth vnto the mercie of God, and commendeth himself to the prayers of the church: these are assuredly no smal signes of repentance: therefore we may coniect that he repented. And yet the old writers affirme with one consent, that he was a great enimie to Peter afterward, & that he disputed with him by the space of three dayes at Rome. The disputation is also extant in writing vnder the name of Clement, but it hath in it such filthy dotings, that it is a wonder that Christian eares can abide to heare them. Again, Augustine writing to Ianuarius, saith, that there were diuerse and false rumors spread abroad in Rome in his time, concerning that mater. Wherefore nothing is more safe than bidding adue to vncertaine opinions, simplie to imbrace that which is set downe in the Scriptures. That which we reade elsewhere of Simon, may iustly be suspected for many causes.

25 *And they testified.* In these wordes Luke teacheth, that Peter and Iohn came not onely, that they might enrich the Samaritans with the gifts of the Spirite, but also that they might establish them in the faith which they had already receiued, by approuing Philip his doctrine. For thus much doth the word *testifie* import: as if he shuld say that it came to passe by their testimony, that the word of God had ful & perfit authority, and that the truth was of force, as being well testified and authenticall. Notwithstanding Luke teacheth therewithal, that they were faithful witnesses of God, when he addeth that they vttered the word of god. This was therefore the sum of the Apostles doctrine, faithfully to vtter those things which they had learned of the Lord, and not their own inuentions or the inuentions of any man else. He saith, that they did this not onely in the cittie, but also in villages. Therefore wee see that they were so inflamed to further the glory of Christ, that whither soeuer they came, they had him in their mouth. So that the seede of life began to be sown throughout the whole region, after that it was preached in the Citie.

26 *And an Angel of the Lord spake to Philip, saying: Arise, and go toward the South, to the way which goeth downe from Ierusalem to Gaza: it is waste.*

27 *And when he arose, he went. And beholde a man an Aethiopian, an Eunuch, a man of great authoritie with Candace Queene of Aethiopia, which had the rule of all her treasure, which came to Ierusalem to worship:*

28 *And as he returned and sate in his Charriot, he reade Isaias the Prophet.*

29 *And the Spirite saide to Philip: Drawe neere, and bee thou ioyned to this Charriot.*

30 *And as Philip ran vnto it, he heard him reading the Prophet Isay, and he said*

said: Vnderstandest thou what thou readeſt?

- 31 *He ſaid, How can I, vnleſſe ſome man direct me? And he requested Philip, that he would come vp and ſit with him.*

26 *And The Angel.* Luke paſſeth ouer vnto a new hitorie, to wit, how the goſpel came euen vnto the Æthiopians. For though hee reporteth there was but one man conuerted vnto the faith of Chriſt, yet becauſe his authoritie and power was great in all the realme, his faith might ſpread abroad a ſweet ſmel farre and wide. For we know that the Goſpel grew of ſmall beginnings: and therein appeared the power of the Spirit more plainly, in that one graine of ſeede did fill a whole cuntry in a ſmall ſpace. Philip is firſt commaunded by the Angel, to goe towarde the South: the Angel, telleth him not to what ende. And thus doeth God oftentimes uſe to deale with thoſe that be his, to proue their obedience. He ſheweth what he will haue them to doe: he commaundeth them to doe this or that: but he keepeth the ſucceſſe hidden with himſelfe. Therefore let vs be content with the commaundement of God alone, although the reaſon of that which he inioineth, or the fruit of obedience appeare not by & by. For although this be not plainly expreſſed, yet al the commandements of God containe an hidden promiſe, that ſo often as we obey him, al that work which we take in hand, muſt needs fall out wel. Moreouer this ought to be ſufficient for vs, that God doth allow our ſtudies, when as we take nothing in hand raſhly or without his commaundement. If any man obieſt that Angels come not downe daily from heauen, to reueale vnto vs what we ought to do: the anſwere is redy: that we are ſufficiently taught in the word of God, what we ought to doe, and that they are neuer deſtitute of counſel, who aſke it of him, and ſubmit themſelues to the government of the Spirit. Therefore nothing doeth hinder and keepe vs backe from being ready to follow God, ſaue onely our owne ſlothfulneſſe, and coldneſſe in prayer.

To the way which goeth downe to Gaza. Al the learned grant that that is called Gaza here, which the Hebrewes call *Haza*. Wherefore Pomponius Mela is deceiued, who ſaith that Cambyſes king of Perſia called that citie by this name: becauſe when hee made warre againſt the Ægyptians, he had his riches laid vp there. It is true in deede that the Perſians call treaſure or plentie, Gaza: and Luke uſeth this word ſhortly after in this ſenſe, when as he ſaith that the Eunuch was the chiefe gouernor of the treaſure of Candace: but becauſe that Hebrew word was uſed before ſuch time as Cambyſes was borne, I do not think but that it was corrupt afterwarde, the letter *Heh* being chaunged into *G*, which thing wee ſee was done in al other almoſt. The Epithet *o waſte*, is added for this cauſe, becauſe Alexander of Macedonia laid waſte that olde Gaza. Alſo Luke reſuteth thoſe who make Conſtantinus the builder of the ſecond & new Gaza, who affirmeth that it was an hundreth and fiftie yeeres before: but it may be that he bewtifed and enlarged the citie after it was built. And all men confeſſe that this new Gaza was ſituate on the ſea coaſt, diſtant twentie ſorlongs from the olde Citie.

27 Beholde a man an *Ethiopian*. Hee calleth him a man, who hee saith shortly after was an Eunuch: but because kings & Queenes in the East were wont to appoint Eunuches ouer their weightiest affaires: thereby it came to passe that Lordes of great power were called generally Eunuches, where as notwithstanding they were men. Furthermore Philip findeth in deed now at length, that he did not obey God in vain. Therefore whosoever committeth the successe to God, and goeth on forward thither whither he biddeth him, he shall at length trie, that all that falleth out well, which is taken in hand at his appointment. The name *Candace* was not the name of one Queene onely: but as all the Emperors of Rome were called *Cæsars*, so the Ethiopians, as *Plinie* witnesseth, called their Queenes *Candaces*. This maketh also vnto the matter, that the writers of histories report that that was a noble & welthy kingdom, because it may the better bee gathered by the roialtie and power thereof, howe gorgeous the condition and dignitie of the Eunuch was. The heade and principall place was *Meroe*. The prophane writers agree with *Luke*, who report that women vsed to reigne there.

Came to worship. Hereby we gather, that the name of the true God was spread farre abroad, seeing hee had some worshippers in farre countries. Certes it must needs be that this man did openly professe another worship than his nation: for so great a Lorde could not come into Iudea by stealth: and yndoubtedly hee brought with him a great traine. And no maruel if there were some euery where in the East parts which worshipped the true God: because that after the people were scattered abroad, there was also some smell of the knowledge of the true God spread abroad with them throughout forraine countries: yea the banishment of the people was a spreading abroade of true godlinesse. Also we see that though the Romans did condemne the Iewish religion with many cruell edicts, yet coulde they not bring to passe, but that many euen on heapes would professe the same. These were certaine beginnings of the calling of the Gentiles, vntill such time as *Christ* hauing with the brightnes of his comming put away the shadowes of the Lawe, might take away the difference which was betweene the Iewes and the Gentiles, and hauing pulled downe the wall of separation, he might gather together from all partes the children of God. Whereas the Eunuch came to Ierusalem to worship, it must not be accounted any superstition. hee might in deede haue called vpon God in his own country: but this man would not omit the exercises which were prescribed to the worshippers of God: & therefore this was his purpose, not onely to nourish faith priuily in his heart, but also to make profession of the same amongst men. And yet notwithstanding he could not be so diuorced from his nation, but that he might wel know that he should be hated of many: but he made more account of the external profession of religion which he knew God did require, than of the fauor of men. And if such a smal sparkle of the knowledge of the Law, did so shine in him, what a shame were it for vs, to choke the perfit light of the gospel, with vnfaithful silence? If any do obiect that the sacrifices were euen then abrogated, & that now the time was come, where-
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Eph. 2.14.

in God would bee called vpon euerywhere without difference of place: we may easily answer, That those to whom the truth of the Gospel was not yet reuealed, were retained in the shadowes of the law without any superstition. For whereas it is said, that the law was abolished by Christ as concerning the ceremonies, it is thus to bee vnderstoode: that where Christ sheweth himselfe plainly, those rites vanishe away, which prefigured him when he was absent. Whereas the Lord suffered the Eunuch to come to Ierusalem, before he sent him a teacher: it is to bee thought that it was done for this cause, because it was profitable that he shoulde yet be framed by the rudiments of the law, that he might be made more apt afterward to receiue the doctrine of the Gospel. And whereas God sent none of the Apostles vnto him at Ierusalem, the cause lyeth hid in his secreet counsell: vnlesse peraduenture it were done, that he might make more account of the Gospel as of some treasure found sodainly, & offered vnto him contrary to hope: or because it was better that Christ should be set before him, after that being separated & withdrawn from the external pompe of ceremonies and the beholding of the temple, he sought the way of saluation quietlie at suche time as hee was at rest.

28 *Hee read Isaias.* The reading of the Prophet sheweth that the Eunuch did not worship a God vnaduisedly according to the vnderstanding of his owne head, whom he had feigned to himselfe, but whom hee knew by the doctrine of the law. And surely this is the right way to worship God, not to snatch at bare and vaine rites, but to adioyne the word thereunto: otherwise there shall bee nothing but that which commeth by chaunce and is confused. And certainly the fourme of worshipping prescribed in the law, differeth nothing from the inuentiōs of men, saue only because God giueth light there by his word. Therefore those which are Gods scholars, do worshippinge him aright only, that is, those who are taught in his schoole. But hee seemeth to loose his labour when he readeth without profite. For he confesseth that he cannot vnderstande the Prophetes meaning, vnlesse he be holpen by some other teacher. I answer, as he read the prophet with a desire to learne, so hee hoped for some fruite, and he found it indeed. Therefore why doth he denie that he can vnderstand the place which he had in hand? For because he manifestly confesseth his ignorāce in darker places. There be many things in Isaias which need no long exposition: as when hee preacheth of the goodnesse and power of God, partly that he may inuite men vnto faith, partly that he may exhort and teach them to lead a godly life. Therefore no man shall bee so rude an idiote, which shall not profite somewhat by reading that booke, and yet notwithstanding hee shall peraduenture scarce vnderstand euery tenth verse. Such was the Eunuches reading. For seeing that according to his capacitie hee gathered those things which serued to edification, he had some certain profite by his studies. Neuerthelesse though he were ignorant of many things, yet was he not wearied, so that hee did cast away the booke. Thus must wee also reade the scriptures: we must greedily and with a prompt mind receiue those things which are plaine and wherein God openeth his minde: as for those

those things which are yet hid frō vs, we must passe them ouer, vntill we see greater light. And if we be not wearied with reading, it shal at length come to passe that the scripture shalbe made more familiar by continuall vse.

31 *How should I.* Most excellent modestie of the Eunuch, who doeth not only permit Philip, who was one of the commō sort, to questiō with him, but doth also willingly confesse his ignorance. And surely wee must neuer hope that he will euer shew himselfe apt to be taught, who is puffed vp with the confidence of his owne wit. Hereby it commeth to passe that the reading of the scriptures doth profite so few at this day, because we can scarce finde one amongst an hundreth, which submitteth himself willingly to learne. For whiles all men almost are ashamed to bee ignorant of that whereof they are ignorant: euery man had rather prouddie nourish his ignorance, than seem to be scholer to other men. Yea a great manie take vpon them hautilie to teach other men. Neuerthelesse let vs remember that the Eunuch did so confesse his ignorance, that yet notwithstanding he was one of Gods scholers when he read the scripture. This is the true reuerence of the scripture, when as we acknowledge that there is that wisdom laid vp there, which surpasseth all our senses: and yet notwithstanding we do not loath it, but reading diligētly we depend vpon the reuelation of the Spirite, and desire to haue an interpreter giuen vs.

He prayed Philip that he would come vp. This is another token of modestie, that he seeketh an interpreter and teacher. Hee might haue reiected Philip, according to the pride of riche men: for it was a certaine secrete vpbraiding of ignorance, when Philip said, *vnderstandest thou what thou readeest?* But rich men think that they haue great iniurie done the, if any man speake homely to them. And therefore they break out by and by into these speeches, *What is that to thee? or, What hast thou to doe with me?* But the Eunuch submitteth himselfe humbly to Philip, that by him he may be taught. Thus must we be minded, if we desire to haue God to bee our teacher, whose Spirite resteth vpon the humble and meek. And if any man mistrusting himselfe, submit himself to be taught, the angels shall rather come downe from heauen, than the Lorde will suffer vs to labour in vaine. Though (as did the Eunuch) we must vse all helpes, which the Lorde offereth vnto vs, for the vnderstanding of the scriptures. Frantike men require inspirations and reuelations from heauen, and in the meane season they contemne the minister of GOD, by whose hand they ought to bee gouerned. Othersome which trust too much to their owne wit, will vouchsafe to heare no man, and they will read no commentaries. But God will not haue vs to despise those helps which he offereth vnto vs, and hee suffereth not those to scape scotfree, which despise the same. And here we must remember, that the scripture is not only giuen vs, but that interpreters and teachers, are also added to be helpes to vs. For this cause the Lorde sent rather Philip than an Angell to the Eunuch. For to what ende serued this circuit, that God calleth Philip by the voyce of the Angell, and sendeth not the Angell himselfe

himselfe forthwith, saue only because he would accuse me vs to heare men? This is assuredly no small commendation of externall preaching, that the voice of God soundeth in the mouth of men to our saluation, when angels hold their peace. Concerning which thing I will speake more vpon the nienth and tenth chapters.

32 Furthermore, the sentence of scripture, which he read, was this: He was lead as a sheepe to be slaine, and as a lambe dumbe before the sheaver, so opened hee not his mouth.

33 In his humilitie, his iudgement is exalted. Who shal declare his generations because his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the Eunuch answering Philip, said: I pray thee, of whom speaketh the Prophet this? Of himself, or of some other?

35 And Philip opening his mouth, & beginning at this scripture, preached Iesus to him.

32 The sentence of scripture. It is properly a text or period. Let vs know that he light not vpon this place by chaunce, but that it came to passe by the wonderfull prouidence of God, that Philip shoulde haue a proposition or principle, from which the whole summe of Christianitie might be fet. Therefore first he hath matter of full instruction brought to his hand by the secret direction of the Spirit: secondly, the fourme is plainly applied to the ministerie of man. This is an excellent prophesie of Christ, and aboue all others to bee remembered: because Isaiaes saith plainly there, that such should be the maner of redeeming the church, that the sonne of God doe by his death purchase life for men: that he offer himself in sacrifice to purge mens sinnes: that hee bee punished with the hand of God, & that he goe downe euen vnto the very hell, that hee may exalt vs vnto heauen, hauing deliuered vs from destruction. In sum, this place teacheth plainly how men are reconciled to God, howe they obtaine righteousnesse, how they come to the kingdome of God, being deliuered from the tyrannie of Satan, and loosed from the yoke of sinne: to be brieft, whence they must fet all partes of their saluation. Notwithstanding I will only expound those things which Luke here citeth, and there be in deed two members: in the former hee teacheth that Christe to the end he may redeem the church, must needes be so broken that he appeare like to a man which is cast downe & past hope. Secondly hee affirmeth that his death shal giue life, & that there shal a singular triumph issue out of great despayre. Whereas he compareth Christe to a lambe, which suffereth it selfe to be led to be slaine: and to a sheepe which offereth herself meekely to be shorne: his meaning is, that the sacrifice of Christe shalbe voluntarie. And surely this was the way to appease Gods wrath, in that he shewed himselfe obedient. Hee spake in deede before Pilate: but not to saue his life, but rather that hee might willingly offer himselfe to die, as hee was appointed by the Father, and so might bring that punishment vpon himself, which was prepared for vs. Therefore the prophet teacheth both things, that Christ must needes haue suffred, that
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John. 8.
34-36.

he might purchase life for vs: and that hee was to suffer death willingly, that he might blot out the stubbornnesse of men by his obedience. And hence must we gather an exhortation vnto godlines, as Peter doeth, but that doctrine of faith which I haue already touched, is former in order.

33 *In his humilitie, his iudgement.* The Eunuche had either the Greeke volume, or els Luke did set downe the reading which was then vsed, as he vseth to doe. The prophet saith that Christe was exalted out of sorrow and iudgement, by which wordes he signifieth a wonderfull victorie, which immediately ensued his casting downe. For if he had been oppressed with death, there could nothing haue beene hoped for at his handes.

Therefore to the end the Prophet may establish our faith in Christe, after that he had described him to be stricken with the hand of God, and to be subiect to be slaine, he putteth vpon him a new person now: to wit, that he commeth vp out of the depth of death as a conqueror, & out of the very hell, being the authour of eternal life. I know in deed that this place is diuersly expounded: some there bee which vnderstande by this, that he was carried from the prison to the crosse: other some there bee, who thinke that *to be taken away*, doth signifie as much, as to be brought to nought. And indeed the signification of the Hebrew word *Lacham*, is doubtfull, as is also the signification of the Greeke worde *Airesthai*. But he which shall thoroughly weigh the Text, shall agree with mee in that which I haue said: that he passeth now from that dolefull and vnseemely fight which he had set before our eyes, vnto the new beginning of vnlooked for glory. Therefore the Greeke interpretation differeth not much from the words of the prophet, in the summe of the matter. For Christs iudgement was exalted in his humilitie, or casting down: because at such time as he might seeme to be cast down and oppressed, the father maintained his cause. After this sort *iudgement* shall be taken in this place (as in many other) for *right*. But it signifieth condemnation in the Hebrew text. For the Prophet saith, that after that Christ shall bee brought into great straites, and shalbe like vnto a condemned and lost man, he shalbe lifted vp by the hand of the Father. Therefore the meaning of the words is, that Christ must first haue suffered death, before the Father shoulde exalt him vnto the glory of his kingdom. Which doctrine must be translated vnto the whole bodie of the church: because all the godly ought wonderfully to be lifted vp with the hand of God, that they be not swallowed vppe of death. But when God appeareth to bee the reuenger of his, he doth not only restore them to life, but also getteth to them excellent triumphes of many deathes: as Christ did triumph most gloriously vpon the crosse, wherof the apostle maketh mention in the second chapter to the Collossians.

His generation. After that the prophet hath set forth the victorious death of Christe, he addeth now, that his victorie shall not last onely for a small time, but shall goe beyonde all number of yeeres. For the exclamation of the prophet importeth as much, as if he should deny that the perpetuitie of Christs kingdom can be expressed by the tongue of men.

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But interpreters haue wrested this place miserably. Whereas the olde writers haue indeuoured hereby to proue the eternal generation of the worde of God against Arrius, it is too far dissenting from the prophetes mind Chrysostome his exposition is neuer a whit truer, who referreth it vnto the humane generation. Neither doe they vnderstand the prophet his meaning, which suppose that he inueigheth against the men of that age. Other some thinke better, who take it to be spoken of the Church, saue onely that they are deceiued in the worde *generation*, which they think doth signifie a posteritie or issue. But the worde *do* which the prophet vseth, signifieth amongst the Hebrewes *an age*, or the continuance of mans life. Therefore vndoubtedly this is the prophets meaning, that Christ his life shall endure for euer, when as he shall bee once deliuered by his fathers grace from death: although this life which is without end, appertaineth vnto the whole body of the church: because Christ rose, not that he may liue for himselfe, but for vs. Therefore he extolleth now, in the members, the frute and effect of that victorie which he placed in the head. Wherefore euery one of the faithfull may conceiue sure hope of eternal life out of this place: secondly the perpetuities of the church is rather auouched in the person of Christ.

Because his life is taken from the earth. This is to looke too, to be a verie absurd reason, that Christ doth reigne with such renoume in heauen and earth, because he was cut off. For who can beleue that death is the cause of life? But this was done by the wonderfull counsel of God, that hell should be a ladder, whereby Christ should ascend into heauen: that reproch should be vnto him a passage into life: that the ioyfull brightnes of saluation should appeare out of the horror and darknes of the crosse: that blessed immortalitie shuld flow from the deep pit of death. Because he humbled himselfe, therefore the Father exalted him, that euery knee may bow before him, &c. Now must we bethinke our selues what fellowship we haue with Christ, that it may not bee troublesome to any to goe the same way.

Phil. 2. 10.

34 *The Eunuch said to Philip.* Heere it appeareth what an earnest desire the Eunuch had to learne. He wandereth in diuers prophetes of Esaias as through doubtful boughts, and yet he is not wearie of reading. And whiles that he arrogate nothing to himselfe, he getteth far more contrary to his hope euen at a sodaine, than hee coulde get during his whole life by taking great paines, if he had brought all his quicknesse of wit. So the Lords will bee vnto vs a master though wee bee but small, if acknowledging our ignorance, wee bee not loth to submit our selues to learne. And as the seed couered with earth, lyeth hid for a time: so the Lord will illuminate vs by his Spirite, and will cause that reading which being barren and void of frute, causeth nothing but wearisomnesse, to haue plaine light of vnderstanding. The Lord doth neuer keep the eyes of his so shut, but that so soone as they are once entred, the way of saluation appeareth vnto the in the scripture: but that they profite euer now and then a little by reading: yet doth he suffer them to sticke fast oftentimes, and permitteth their course to be hindered, by some barre which

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is laid in the way, both that he may trie patience of faith in them, and also that he may teach them humilitie by putting them in mind of their ignorance, that he may make them more attentue after that they haue shaken off drowlines, that hee may make them more feruent in prayer, that he may pricke them forward to loue the truth more dearely, that he may set forth the excellencie of his heavenly wisdom, which is otherwise not so esteemed as it ought. But howsoeuer the faithfull do not attaine vnto the mark of perfect knowledge, yet they shall alwayes perceiue that their labour is not in vaine, so that they stop not the way before themselues with proud loathsomnesse. Let this going forward suffice vs vntill the time of full reuelation do come, that euen a small taste of knowledge doth drip into vs the feare of God and faith.

35 *Philip opening his mouth.* To open the mouth, is taken in scripture, for to begin a long speech concerning some graue & weightie matter. Therefore Luke his meaning is, that Philip began to intreat of Christ, as it were with full mouth. He saith that he began with this prophesie, because there is no one which depainteth out Christ more liuely: & it was then brought to his hand. Therefore after that Philip had shewed by the prophetes wordes, after what sort Christ should come, and what was to be hoped for at his hands, he conferred the thing it selfe afterward, that the Eunuch might know that that Christ which was promised, was already reuealed and giuen: and that he might vnderstand his power. Where we translate it, that *he preached Christe*. Luke saith, that hee preached the Gospell. The sense is, that he taught that of Christ which hee vttered in his gospel himselfe, and commaunded to be taught. Whereby we gather, that when Christ is known, we haue the summe of the Gospell.

36 *And as they went on the way, they came to a water. And the Eunuch saide: Loe here is water, what letteth me to be baptized?*

37 *And Philip said: If thou beleuest with all thy heart, thou maiest. He answering said: I beleuee that Iesus Christ is the sonne of God.*

38 *Then he commaunded the charriot to be staid, and they went both down into the water, so wit, Philip & the Eunuch, & he baptized him.*

39 *And when they were come vp out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the Eunuch saue him no more. Therefore he went on in his way reioysing.*

40 *But Philip was found at Azotus: and going on his iourney, hee preached the gospel to all cities, vntill he came to Cesaria.*

36 *What letteth me?* The Eunuch his baptism ensueth now, whence we gather, how greatly he profited in a small time, seeing he offereth himselfe willingly to giue Christ his name. For it must needs bee that faith was after a sort ripe in his heart, seeing that hee brake out into externall profession with such desire. I like not that which Chrysostom noteth, that hee was kept backe with modestie from requiring baptism plainly: for that interrogation hath greater vehemencie than if hee should simply haue said to Philip, I will haue thee to baptize me. But we see

see that Christ was preached to him in such sort, that he knew that baptism was a signe of new life in him, & that therefore he would not neglect the same, because it was added to the worde, & suche an addition as was inseparable. Therefore as he embraced that willingly, which he heard concerning Christ, so now hee breaketh out with a godly zeale into the externall confession of faith, neither doth he thinke it sufficient for him to beleue inwardly before God, vnlesse he testifie before men that hee is a christian. Ther might many things haue come into his mind, which might haue kept him back from being baptized, least that he should lay himself open to the hatred and rebukes both of the queene, and also of the whole nation. But he denieth that any of these things doth hinder him from desiring to be numbred amongst the disciples of Christe. If being instructed but a few houres he came to this point, how filthy is the sluggishnes of those men, who suppress the faith which they haue conceiued, hauing been taught fise, ten, or twentie yeeres.

If thou beleuest with all thy heart. Whereas the Eunuch is not admitted to Baptism, vntill he haue made confession of his faith: we must set a generall rule hence. That those ought to be receiued into the church, who were estraunged from the same before, vntill they haue testified that they beleue in Christ. For baptism is as it were an appertenance of faith: & therefore it is later in order. Secondly, if it be giuen without faith, whose seale it is, it is both a wicked and also too grosse a profaning. But franlike fellowes doe both vnskillfully & also wickedly impugne baptizing of infants vnder colour hereof, why was it meet that faith should go before baptism in the Eunuch? To wit, because seeing that Christe marketh those alone which are of the household of the church with this note and mark, they must be ingrafted vnto the church, who are to bee baptized. And as it is certain that those who are growen vp, are ingrafted by faith, so I say that the childre of the godly are born the childre of the church, and that they are accounted members of Christ from the womb, because God adopteth vs vpon this condition, that he may be also the Father of our seed. Therefore thogh faith be requisite in those which are grown vp, yet this is vntruly translated vnto infants, whose estate is far vnlike. But certain great men haue abused this place, when as they wold proue, that faith hath no confirmation by baptism: for they reasoned thus: the Eunuch is commanded to bring perfect faith vnto baptism: therefore there could nothing be added. But the scripture taketh the whole heart oftentimes for a sincere & vnfeigned heart, whose opposite is a double heart. So that there is no cause why we should imagine that they beleue perfectly, who beleue with the whole heart. seeing that there may be a weak & faint faith in him, who shal notwithstanding haue a sound minde, and a mind free from all hypocrisie. Thus must we take that which Dauid saith, that he loueth the Lord with all his heart. Philip had in deede baptized the Samaritans before, & yet hee knewe that they were yet far from the mark. Therefore the faith of the whole heart, is that which hauing liuing rootes in the heart, doth yet notwithstanding desire to encrease daylie.

I beleuee that Iesus Christ. As Baptisme is grounded in Christe and
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as the truth and force thereof is contained there: so the Eunuch setteth Christ alone before his eyes. The Eunuch knewe before that there was one God, who had made the couenant with Abrahā, who gaue the Law by the hand of Moses, which separated one people from the other nations, who promised Christ, through whom hee would be mercifull to the world: now he confesseth that *Iesus* Christ is that redeemer of the world and *the sonne of god*: vnder which title he comprehendeth briefly, al those thinges which the scripture attributeth to Christ. This is the perfect faith, whereof Philip spake of late, which receiueth Christe, both as hee was promised in times past, & also shewed at length, & that with the earnest affection of the heart, as Paul will not haue this faith to be feigned. Whosoeuer hath not this when he is growne vp, in vaine doth hee boaste of the baptisme of his infancie: for to this end doth Christ admit infants by baptisme, that so soone as the capacite of their age shall suffer, they may addiect themselves to be his disciples, and that beeing baptised with the holy ghost, they may comprehend with the vnderstanding of faith, his power, which baptisme doth prefigure.

38 *They went downe into the water.* Here wee see the rite vsed among the men of old time in baptisme: for they put all the bodie into the water: now the vse is this, that the minister doth only sprinkle the bodie or the head. But we ought not to stand so much about such a smal differēce of a ceremonie, that we should therefore diuide the church, or trouble the same with brawles. We ought rather to fight euē an hundred times to death for the ceremonie it selfe of baptisme, in as much as it was deliuered vs by Christ, than that we should suffer the same to bee taken frō vs. But forasmuch as we haue as well a testimonie of our washing, as of newnesse of life, in the signe of water, forasmuch as Christe representeth vnto vs his blood in the water as in a glasse, that we may fet our cleane-nesse thence: forasmuch as he teacheth that we are fashioned againe by his Spirit, that being dead to sinne, we may liue to righteousnesse: it is certain that we want nothing which maketh to the substance of baptism. Wherefore the church did graunt libertie to her selfe since the beginning, to change the rites somewhat, excepting this substance. For some dipped them thrise, some but once: wherefore there is no cause why wee should bee so strait laced in matters which are of no suche weight: so that that externall pompe doe no whit pollute the simple institution of Christe.

39 *When they were come vp.* To the ende Luke may at length conclude his speech concerning the Eunuch, he saith that Philip was caught away out of his sight: and that was of no small weight to confirme him, forasmuch as he saw, that that man was sent vnto him by God, like to an Angell, and that he vanished away before he could offer him any reward for his paines: whence he might gather that it was no gainefull insinuation, seeing that he was vanished away before he had one halfe pennie giuen him. Whereas Philip had no rewarde at the Eunuches hande, let the seruantes of Christ learne heereby to serue him freely, or rather let the so serue men for nothing, that they hope for a rewarde fro heauen.

The

The Lorde graunteth leaue in deepe to the ministers of the Gospell to receiue a reward at their hands whom they teach: but he forbiddeth the therewithall to be hyelings, which labour for lucre sake. For this must be the marke whereat they must shoote, to gaine the men themselves to God.

1. Cor. 9. 9.

Ioh. 10. 12.

23.

Reioysing. Faith and the knowledge of God, bring forth this frute alwayes of themselves. For what truer matter of ioy can be inuented, than when the Lord doth not only set open vnto vs the treasures of his mercie, but powreth out his heart into vs (that I may so speake,) & giueth vs himself in his sonne, that we may want nothing to perfect felicitie? The heauens begin to looke cleer, and the earth beginneth to be quiet then: the conscience being then deliuered from the dolefull and horrible feeling of Gods wrath, being loosed from the tyrannie of Satan, escaping out of the darknesse of death, beholdeth the light of life. Therefore it is a solemne thing amongst the prophets, to exhort vs to be ioyfull and to triumph, so often as they are about to speake of the kingdom of Christ. But because those men whose mindes are possessed with the vaine ioyes of the world cannot lift vp themselves vnto this spiritual ioy, let vs learne to despise the world, and all vain delights thereof, that Christ may make vs mery in deed.

40 *He was found at Azotus.* It is well known out of the booke of Iosua cha. 11. that Azotus was one of the cities out of which the sonnes of Enack could not bee expelled. It is distant from Ascalon almost 200. furlongs: the Hebrewes call it *Asdod*. Thither was Philip caried, there began he to take his journey on foot, after the maner of men, sowing the seed of the Gospell, wherefoeuer he became. This is surely rare & wonderful stoutnesse, that hee spreadeth the name of godlinesse in his iourney. And whereas Luke saith expressely, that he preached in all cities, vntill he came to Cesarea, and doth not declare that he returned to Samaria, we may thereby coniecture, that he stayed at Cesarea for a time: and yet I leaue this indifferent.

Iosua. 11. 22.

CHAP. IX.

1 **A**ND Saul yet breathing out threatnings and slaughter, against the disciples of the Lord, comming vnto the highest priest,

2 Required epistles of him to Damascus vnto the Synagogues, that if he should finde any of this sect whether they were men or women, he might carrie them bound to Ierusalem.

3 And as he was in the way, it hapned that he drew neere to Damascus: and suddenly there shined a light about him from heauen,

4 And falling flat to the ground, he heard a voice, saying to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said: I am Iesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against pricks.

1 And Saul. Luke setteth downe in this place a noble historie, and
P a histo-

a historie ful wel worthie to be remēbred, concerning the conuerſion of Paul, after what ſort the Lorde did not only bring him vnder, and make him ſubieſt to his commandemēt, when he ragēd like an vntamed beaſt, but alſo how he made him another & a newe man. But becauſe Luke ſetteth down all things in order, as in a famous work of God, it ſhalbe more conuenient to follow his text, that all that may come in order whatſoeuer is worth the noting. When as he ſaith, that *he breathed out threatenings & ſlaughter* as yet, his meaning is, that after that his handes were once imbrued with innocent blood, he proceeded in like crueltie, & was alwayes a furious & bloodie enemie to the church, after that hee had once made that entrance, wherof mentiō is made in the death of Steuen. For which cauſe it was the more incredible that he could bee ſo ſo-dainly tamed. And whereas ſuch a cruell wolf was not only turned into a ſheepe, but did alſo put on the nature of a ſheephearde: the wonderfull hand of God did ſhew it ſelf therein manifeſtly.

2 And Luke deſcribeth therewithal, that he was furniſhed with weapons and power to doe hurt, when as he ſaith, that he had obtained letters of the higheſt prieſt, that he might bring all thoſe bound to Ieruſalem, whom he ſhould finde profeſſing the name of Chriſt. There is mention made of women, that it may the better appear how deſirous he was to ſhed blood, who had no reſpect of ſexe, who euen armed enemies are wont to ſpare in the heat of warre. Therefore he ſetteth forth before vs a fierce and cruell beaſt, who had not only libertie giuen him to rage, but had alſo his power encreaſed to deuoure and deſtroy godly men, as if a mad man had had a ſword put into his hand. Whereas I haue tranſlated it *ſet*, Luke hath *Way*, which metaphor is common enough in the ſcriptures. Therefore Paul his purpoſe was quite to put out the name of Chriſt by deſtroying all the godly cruelly.

3 *As he was in the way.* In crauing Epistles of the high prieſt, hee ran headlong againſt Chriſt willingly: and now hee is enforced to obey whether he will or no. This is ſurely the moſt excellent mercy of god, in that that man is reclaimed vnto ſaluation contrarie to the purpoſe of his minde, whom ſo great a heat caried headlong into deſtruction. Whereas the Lord ſuffreth him to receiue letters, and to come neere to the citie: hereby we ſee how well he knoweth the very inſtants of times to doe euery thing in due time. Hee could haue preuented him ſooner, if it had ſeemed good to him ſo to doe, that he might deliuer the godly from fear and carefullneſſe: but hee ſetteth out his benefites more thereby, in that he tyeth the iawes of the greedie wolfe, euen when he was readie to enter the ſheepfold. Alſo wee knowe that mens ſtubborneſſe encreaſeth more and more by going forward: wherefore the conuerſion of Paul was ſo much the harder, forasmuch as he was alreadie made more obſtinate, by continuing his furie.

Shined about him. Becauſe it was none eaſie matter to pull downe ſo great pride, to breake ſuch a loſtie courage, to pacifie ſuch a blinde heate of wicked zeale, and finally to bridle a moſt vnbrideled beaſt: Chriſte muſt needs haue ſhewed ſome ſigne of his maieſtie, whereby Paul might perceiue

perceiue that he had to do with god himself, & not with any mortal mō. Although there were some respect had of humbling him, because he was vnworthis to haue Christ to accustome him by and by to obey, by laying vpon his necke the meek and sweete yoke of his Spirite, & he was scarce capable of so great gentlenesse, vntill his crueltie might be broken. Mans sense cannot comprehend the diuine glory of Christ, as it is, but as God did oftentimes put vpon him formes wherein hee did shewe himselfe: so Christ did now declare and make manifest his diuinitie to Paule, & shewed some token of his presence, that hee might thereby terrifie Paule. For although the godly be afraide and tremble at the seeing of God, yet it must needes be that Paul was farre more afraid, when as he perceiued that the diuine power of Christ was set full against him.

4 And therefore Luke saith that he fell to the ground. For what other thing can befall man, but that he must lie prostrate, and bee as it were brought to nothing, when he is ouerwhelmed with the present feeling of Gods glory? And this was the first beginning of the bringing downe of Paul, that hee might become apt to heare the voice of Christ, which he had despised so long as he sate hautilly vpon his horse.

Saul, Saul. Luke compared the light which shined round about Paul, to lightning, though I doe not doubt but that lightnings did flie in the ayre. And this voice which Christ did send out to beat downe his pride, may ful well be called a *lightning or thunderbolt*, because it did not onely strike him, and make him astonied, but did quite kill him, so that hee was now as no bodie with himselfe, who did so much please himselfe before, and did challenge to him selfe authoritie to put the Gospell to flight. Luke putteth downe his name in Hebrew in this place, Saul, Saul, because he repeateth the wordes of Christe, who spake vnto him vndoubtedly according to the common custome of the countrie.

5 *Who art thou, Lord?* We haue Paul now somewhat tamed, but he is not yet Christes disciple. Pride is corrected in him, and his furie is brought downe, but he is not yet so thoroughly healed, that hee obeyeth Christ: he is only readie to receiue commaundements, who was before a blasphemer. Therefore this is the question of a man that is afraid, and throwne downe with amazednesse. For why doeth hee not knowe by so many signes of Gods presence, that it is God that speaketh? Therefore that voice proceeded from a panting and doubtfull minde: therefore Christ driueth him nigher vnto repentance. When he addeth, *I am Iesus*, let vs remember, that that voice sounded from heauen, therefore it ought to haue pearced the mind of Paul, whē he considered that he had made warre against God hitherto: it ought to haue brought him by and by to true submissiō, when he considered that he should not escape scotfree, if he should continue rebellious against him, whose hand he could not escape. This place containeth a most profitable doctrine: and the profite thereof is manifolde. For first Christe sheweth what great account hee maketh of his Gospell, when hee pronounceth that it is his cause, from which he will not be separated.

Col. 1. 24.

Therefore he can no more refuse to defend the same, than he can deny himself. Secondly, the godly may gather great comfort by this, in that they heare that the sonne of god is partner with them of the crosse, whē as they suffer & labour for the testimonie of the Gospell, & that he doth as it were put vnder his shoulders, that he may beare some part of the burden. For it is not for nothing that he saith, that he suffereth in our person, but he will haue vs to be assuredly perswaded of this, that he suffereth together with vs, as if the enemies of the gospel shoulde wounde vs thorow his side. Wherefore Paul saith, that that is wanting in the sufferings of Christ, what persecutions soeuer the faithful suffer at this day for the defence of the Gospel. Furthermore this consolation tendeth not onely to that end, to comfort vs, that it may not be troublesome to vs to suffer with our head, but that we may hope that hee will reuenge our miseries, who crieth out of heauē; that, Al that which we suffer, is comō to him as well as to vs. Lastly, we gather heereby what horrible iudgement is prepared for the persecutors of the Church, who like Giants besiege the very heauen, & shake their darts which shall pearce their own head by and by. Yea by troubling the heauens they prouoke the thūderbolt of Gods wrath against themselves. Also we are all taught generally, that no mā run against Christ, by hurting his brother vniustly: & specially that no man resist the truth rashly, & with a blinde madnesse vnder colour of zeale.

It is hard for bee. This is a prouerbiall sentence, taken from oxen or horses, which when they are pricked with goads, doe themselves no good by kicking, saue onely that they double the euill by causing the pricke to goe farther into their skinned. Christ applieth this similitude vnto himselfe very fitly: because men shall bring vpon themselves a double euill, by striuing against him, who must of necessitie bee subiect to his will and pleasure will they, nill they. Those which submit themselves willingly to Christ, are so far from feeling any pricking at his hands, that they haue in him a readie remedie for all wounds: but all the wicked who indeuour to cast out their poysoned stinges against him, shall at length perceiue that they are Asses, and Oxen subiect to the pricke. So that hee is vnto the godly a foundation whereon they rest, but vnto the reprobate who stumble at him, a stone, which with his hardnesse grindeth them to powder. And although we speake here of the enemies of the gospel, yet this admonition may reach farther: to wit, that we do not think that we shall get any thing by biting the bridle so often as wee haue any thing to doe with god: but that being like to gentle horses, we suffer our selves meekly to be turned about and guided by his hand: and if hee spurre vs at any time, let vs bee made more readie to obey by his pricks: least that befall vs which is saide in the Psalme: that the iawes of vntamed Horses and Mules are tyed and kept in with an harde bit, least they leape vpon vs, &c. In this historie wee haue an vniuersall figure of that Grace which the Lorde sheweth forth daylie in calling vs all. All men doe not see themselves so violently against the gospel: yet neuertheless both pride & also rebellion against God are naturally ingendred in all men: we are all wicked & cruel naturally: therefore in that we are turned to god, that cometh

meth to passe by the wonderfull & secret power of God contrary to nature. The papists also ascribe the prayse of our turning vnto God, to the grace of God, yet only in part: because they imagine that wee worke together. But when as the Lord doth mortifie our flesh, he subdueth vs, & bringeth vs vnder, as he did Paul: neither is our wil one haire readier to obey, than was Paules, vntil such time as the pride of our heart be beaten downe, and he haue made vs not only flexible, but also willing to obey and follow. Therefore such is the beginning of our conuersion, that the Lord seeketh vs of his owne accord when we wander and go astray, though hee bee not called and sought: that hee chaudgeth the stubborn affections of our hart, to the end he may haue vs to be apt to be taught. Furthermore, this historie is of great importaunce to confirme Paule his doctrine. If Paule had alwayes been one of Christes disciples, wicked and froward men might extenuate the weight of the testimonie, which he giueth of his master. If he should haue shewed himselfe to be easie to be intreated, and gentle at the first, we shuld see nothing but that which is proper to man: but when as a deadly enemy to Christe, rebellious against the gospel, puffed vp with the confidence which he reposed in his wisdom, inflamed with hatred of the true faith, blinded with hypocrisie, wholly set vpon the ouerthrowing of the truth, is sodainly changed into a new man, after an vnwonted maner: and of a wolfe, is not only turned into a sheep, but doth also take to himselfe a shepheards nature: it is as if Christ should bring forth with his hand some Angel sent from heauen. For we doe not now see that Saul of Tarsus: but a newe man framed by the Spirit of God: so that hee speaketh by his mouth now as it were from heauen.

6. And he trembling and fearing said: Lord, what wilt thou haue me to do? And the Lorde said vnto him: Arise, and goe into the citie, where it shalbe told thee, what thou must doe.
7. And the men which accompanied him in his iourney, stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, and seeing no man.
8. And when Saul was risen from the ground, when his eyes were opened he sawe no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him to Damascus.
9. And he was three dayes without sight, neither eating nor drinking.

6 The frute of that reprehension followeth, wherewith we haue said it was requisite that Paule should haue been sore shaken, that his hardnesse might be broken: for now he offereth himself as readie to do what soeuer he should command him, whom of late he despised. For when he asketh what Christ would haue him to doe, he graunteth him authority and power. Euen the very reprobate are also terrified with the threatening of God, so that they are compelled to reuerence him, and to submit themselves vnto his will and pleasure: yet neuertheless they cease not to fret, & to foster stubbornnes within. But as God humbled Paul, so he wrought effectually in his hart. For it came not to passe by any goodnesse of nature, that Paule did more willingly submit himselfe to God, Exod. 7. 13.

than Pharao: but because (being like to an anvil) did with his hardnes beate back the whips of God wherewith he was to be brought vnder, (euen as it had bin the strokes of a hammer): but the heart of Paul was so dauidely made a fleshie heart of a stonie heart, after that it receiued softnes from the Spirit of God, which softnes it had not naturally. The same thing do we also trie daily in our selues. he reproveth vs by his word, hee threatneth, & terrifieth vs, he adderh also light correction, & preparerh vs diuers waies vnto subiection. but al these helps shall neuer cause any man to bring forth good frute, vnlesse the Spirit of God do mollifie his heart within.

And the Lord said vnto him. After that Paul had put his stiffe neck vnder the yoke of Christ, he is now gouerned by his hand. For doubtles the Lord doth not so bring vs into the way, that he leaueth vs either before we begin our course, or in the midst thereof: but he bringeth vs vnto the very mark by litle & litle. Luke depainteth out vnto vs in this place this continuall course of gods gouernance: for he taketh him after ward vnto himself to be taught, who he hath made apt to be taught. neither doth that any whit hinder that he vseh mans ministry in this point: because the authoritie & power remaineth neuer thelesse in him, howsoeuer he accomplish his work by man. Though it may seem an absurd thing, that Christ who is the eternall wisdom of god, doth send a scholar (who was readie to heare, & did gape after instruction) vnto another man, that he might learne. But I answer, that that was don not without cause. For the Lord ment by this means to proue Paul his modestie, when he sendeth him to one of his scholers to be taught: as if he himself wold not vouchsafe as yet to speak vnto him familiarly, but sendeth him to his seruants, whom he did of late both so proudly contemne, & so cruelly persecute. And we are also taught humilitie vnder his person. For if Christe made Paul subiect to the teaching of a comon disciple, which of vs can grudge to heare any teacher, so that he be appointed by Christe: that is, hee declare himself to be his minister in deed? Therefore wheras Paul is sent to Ananias, let vs know that that is done to adorne the ministerie of the church. This is assuredly no smal honor, wherunto it pleaseth god to exalt mankind, when as he choseth our brethre fro amongst vs, to be interpreters of his wil, when as he causeth his holy oracles to sound in the mouth of mā which is naturally giue to lying & vanitie. But the vnthankfulnes of the world bewraieith it self again herein, that no man can abide to hear whē God speaketh by the mouth of man. All men could desire to haue Angels come flying vnto the, or that heauen should bee now and then cut asunder, & that the visible glory of god shuld come thence. For asmuch as this preposterous curiositie, springeth fro pride & wicked contempt of the word, it setteth open a gate to many dotings, & breaketh the bond of mutuall consent among the faithfull. Therefore the Lord doth testifie, that it pleaseth him that wee should be taught by men & confirmeth the order set downe by himself. And to this purpose serue these titles. He which heareth you, heareth me: that he may cause his word to be reuerenced as it ought.

It shalbe told thee. Christ putteth Ananias in his place by these wordes, as touching the office of teaching: not because he resigneth his authoritie to him, but because he shalbe a faithful minister, & a sincere preacher of the gospel. Therefore we must alwayes vse this moderatiō, that we hear God alone in Christ, & Christ himselfe alone, yet as hee speaketh by his ministers: and these two vices must be auoided, that the ministers be not proude; vnder colour of such a precious function: or that their base condition impaire no whit of the dignitie of heauenly wisdom.

7 And the men. He speaketh now briefly of the companions of Paul, that they were witnesses of the vision. Yet it seemeth that this narration doth not in all points agree with that of Paul, which wee shall see in the 22, chap. For hee wil say there, that his companions were terrified with the light, but they heard no voice. Some there be, who think that it was a fault, and that through ignorance of the writer, the negation is placed out of his right place. I think that it is no hard matter to answer it: because it may be that they heard the sound of the voice, yet did they not discern, either who it was that spake, or what was spokē. They heard not, saith he, the voice of him that spake with me. Surely, this is the meaning of these words, that he alone knew the speech of Christ. It followeth not thereupon, but that the rest might haue heard a darke & doubtful voice. Whereas Luke saith in this place, that there was a voice heard, & no mā seen, his meaning is that the voice proceeded from no man, but that it was uttered by God. Therefore to the ende the myracle may carry the greater credit, Paul his companions see a light like to lightning, they see Paul lie prostrate, a voice they heare (though not distinctly) sounding from heauen: and yet neuerthelesse Paul alone is taught what hee must doe.

Acts. 22. 9.

8 He was raysed vp from the earth. Luke addeth now that he was taken with so great feare, that he could not rise of himselfe: and not that only: but he was also blinde for a time, that he might forget his former wit and wilnesse. When as he saith, that *after that his eyes were opened, hee sawe not*: it seemeth that it doth not agree with the other wordes which shall follow by & by, that his eyes were couered as it wer with scales: but the meaning of this place is, that he was blind indeed, and deprived of his sight for that three dayes: because when he opened his eyes, he saw nothing.

9 Whereas he saith that he neither eate nor dranke for the space of three dayes, that is to be counted a part of the miracle. For although the men of the east countrie endure hunger better than wee, yet wee doe not reade that anie did fast three dayes, saue onelie those who had want of vittal, or who were constrained by some greater necessitie. Therefore wee gather that Paul was wonderfullie afraid, seeing that being as it were dead, he tasted no meate for three dayes.

10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus called Ananias, vnto whom the Lord said in a vision: Ananias. And hee said: Here am I Lord.

- 11 And the Lorde saide vnto him, *Arise, and goe into the way that is called Streights: and seeke in the house of Iudas, one called Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth.*
- 12 And he hath seene in a vision a man named Ananias entring in, and laying his hand vpon him that he might see.

10 We haue said before that this man was rather chosen, than any of the Apostles, that Paul hauing laid away the swelling of his arrogancie, might learne to heare the least, and that hee come downe from too great loftines; euen vnto the lowest degree. And this vision was necessary for Ananias, least through feare he should withdraw himselfe from that function which was enioyned him, to wit, to teach Paul. For though he knowe that the Lorde calleth him, yet he slydeth backe, or at least he excuseth himselfe. Therefore it was requisite, that hee should haue some certaine testimonie of his calling, that there should happie successe bee promised to his labour, that he might take that in hand with a ioyfull & valiaunt minde, which the Lord commanded. Furthermore, as Christ animateth and confirmeth Ananias, by appearing to him in the vision: so he prepareth and maketh Paul readie for all thinges, that hee may receiue Ananias reuerently, as if he would receiue an angell comming frō heauen. The Lord could haue sent Paule straightway vnto Ananias, and haue shewed him his house, but this was more fit for his confirmation: because he knew the better, that the Lorde had a care of him. And also the Lorde setteth out his grace vnto vs, that as he stopped Paul before, so now he reacheth him his hande of his owne accord, by his minister. And in the meane season we are also taught by his example, to be more readie and carefull to seeke out the lost sheepe.

In a vision. This worde *vision* signifieth some sight which was set before the eyes, to testifie gods presence. For this is the vse of visions, that the maiestie of the worde being well proued, it may purchase credite amongst men. Which kind of confirmation God vsed oftentimes toward the Prophetes: as he saith that he speaketh to his seruants by a vision or by a dreame. He hath in deed suffered Satan to deceiue the vnbeleeuers with false imaginations and visures. But forasimuche as Satan his juggling casts are of power only in darknes: God doth lighten the minds of his children so, that they assure theselues that they need not to feare legierdemaine. Therefore Ananias answereth, *Here am I, Lord:* knowing in deed that it was God.

11 *For behold he prayeth.* Luke sheweth that Paul gaue himself to praier those three dayes: and peraduenture this was one cause why he fasted, although it be certaine, as I haue already saide, that hee suffered suchie long hunger, because he was after a sort depriued of sense, as men which are in a trauunce vse to be. Christ doth assuredly speake of no short praier in this place, but hee doeth rather shewe, that Paule continued in this kinde of exercise, vntill hee shoulde bee more quiet in minde. For besides other causes of terrour, that voice mighte sound in his eares, *Saul, Saul why persecutest thou mee?* And it is not to bee doubted but

but that the careful looking for of a perfect reuelation, did maruellously trouble his minde: but this was the reason why the Lorde caused him to wait three dayes, that he might the more kindle in him an earnest desire to pray.

12 *He saw a man named Ananias.* It is vncertaine whither Luke do yet repete the words of Christ, or hee adde this of his owne. Those which take it in the person of Luke, are moued with some shew of absurditie, because it is an vnlikely thing, that Christ vsed these wordes. Although this may be easily answered thus: to wit, that Christ confirmeth Ananias after this sort, There is no cause why thou shouldest feare, but that hee will receiue thee willingly, forasmuch as he already knoweth thy shape by a vision. I haue also told him thy name, and what soeuer thou shalt do with him. Yet may the reader choose whether he will.

13 *And Ananias answered, Lord, I haue heard of many of this man: what hurt he hath done to thy seruants at Ierusalem:*

14 *And heere he hath power from the Priests, to binde all which call vpon thy name.*

15 *And the Lord saide vnto him, Goe, because he is a chosen instrument to me, to beare my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israh.*

16 *For I will shew him, how great things he must suffer for my name.*

13 *Lord, I haue heard.* In that Ananias obiecteth the daunger to the Lord, he bewraith his weaknesse of faith therein. Therefore we see that the saints and seruants of God are afraid of death, which thing keepeth them backe from doing their dutie, yea it causeth them sometimes to stagger. Ananias would gladly go to some other place: but this is a point of a good man, that he yeeldeth not so much to feare, that he withdraweth himselfe from Christs obedience. And therefore this is a signe of rare obedience, that although through feare of death hee were somewhat slacke at the first, yet hauing forgotten himselfe by and by, he maketh great haste to goe whither Christ called him. And yet notwithstanding he refuseth not flatly in these words, to doe that which he is commaunded to do: but vseth an excuse verie modestly: Lord, what meaneth this, that thou sendest me to the hangman? Therefore we may see a desire to obey, mixed with feare.

14 *He hath power to binde.* We gather by these words, that the same of the persecution which Saule went about, was spread farre and wide: for which cause his conuersion was more famous. Neuerthelesse the Lorde suffered the faithfull to bee euill intreated, that the benefite of such sodain deliuerance might afterward be the more excellent. We must mark that speech, when he saith that the godly call vpon the name of Christ. For whether you vnderstand it, that in asmuch as they professed that they were Christs, they reioyced therefore in him, or that they vsed to flie to him for succour, inuocation cannot be without sure confidence. By both which the diuinitie of Christ is not onely proued, but also if the second be receiued, which seemeth to be more naturall, wee are taught by the example

example of the faithfull, to call vppon the name of Christ, when hee is preached to vs.

15 *Go, because he is an elect instrument.* The commandement repeted the second time, and also the promise of successe added, taketh away all doubtfullnesse. Therefore slouth shall want an excuse; if it be neuer redressed, after that many prickes be vsed: like as we see that very manie, who howsoeuer the Lorde cry vnto them continually, doe not onely loyter during their whole life, but doe also cherish their slothfulness, by al meanes possible. If any man obiekt that the Lord speaketh not at this day in a vision: I answer, that forasmuch as the Scripture is abundantly confirmed to vs, we must heare God thence. *A vessel of election*, or as Erasmus translateth it, an Elect instrument is taken for an excellent minister. The word *Instrument* doth shew that me can do nothing, saue in asmuch as God vseth their industrie at his pleasure. For if we be instruments, he alone is the autor: the force and power to doe is in his power alone. And that which Christ speaketh in this place of Paul, appertaineth to al me, both one and other. Therefore how stoutlie soeuer euery man labor, and how carefully soeuer he behaue himself in his dutie, yet there is no cause why he shuld challenge to himself any part of praise. Those which dispute subtiltie about the worde *Vessel*, dote through ignorance of the Hebrue tongue. Luke putteth the Genetiue case for the Datiue, and that according to the common custome of the Hebrue tongue. And hee meant to expresse a certain excellencie: as if hee should haue said, that this man shall be no common minister of Christ: but shalbe indued with singular excellencie aboue others. Neuerthelesse we must note that if anie thing bee excellent, it dependeth vpon the fauour of God: as Paul himselfe teacheth else where: Who is hee that separateth thee? to wit, that thou shouldst excell others. To conclude, Christ pronounceth that Paul was chosen vnto great and excellent things.

1. Cor. 4. 7.

To beare my name amongst the Gentils. To him who went about before to suppress the name of Christ, is the same now comitted to be borne. If wee please to take *Schenos* for a vessel, this should be a continuall metaphor: because a minister of the Gospell serueth in steed of a vessel to publish the name of Christ: but because it signifieth rather amongst the Hebrues anie instrument generallie, I take these words *to carrie my name*, for to extoll the same vnto due honour. For Christ is placed after a sort in his princelie throne, whenas the worlde is brought vnder his power by the preaching of the Gospell.

16 *And because.* Paul could not doe this and haue Satan quiet, and the worlde to yeald to him willingly, therefore Luke addeth, that hee shalbee also taught to beare the Crosse. For the meaning of the words is, I will accustome him to suffer troubles, to endure reproches, and to abide all manner conflictcs, that nothing may terrifie him and keepe him backe from doing his ductie. And when Christ maketh himselfe Paule his teacher in this matter, hee teacheth, that the more euerie man hath profited in his schoole, the more able is hee to beare the Crosse. For wee striue against it, and refuse it as a thing most con-

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trarie, vntill hee make our mindes more gentle. Also this place teacheth, that no man is fite to preach the Gospell, seeing the worlde is sette against it, saue onely hee which is armed to suffer. Therefore yf wee will shewe our selues faithfull ministers of Christ, wee must not onely craue at his handes the Spirite of knoweledge and wisdome, but also of constancie and strength, that wee may neuer be discouraged by labouring and toyling, which is the estate of the Godlie.

17 And Ananias went, and entred into the house, and when hee had laide his hands vpon him, he said: Brother Saul, the Lorde hath sent me, namely Iesus, who appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou maist recover thy sight, and that thou maist be filled with the holy Ghost:

18 And forthwith there fell from his eies, as it had bene scales, and hee recovered his sight by and by: and arising he was baptized.

19 And when he had taken meat he was strengthened.

17 Having laid his hands vpon. We haue said elswhere that this was a solemne, and as it were an ordinarie thing amongst the Iewes, to lay their hands vpon those whom they did commende to God. The Apostles translated that custome taken from sacrifices, to their vse: either when they gaue the visible graces of the Spirite: or when they made any man minister of the Church. To this end doth Ananias lay his hands now vpon Paul, partly that hee may consecrate him vnto God, partlie that he may obtaine for him the gifts of the Spirit. And though there be no mention made of doctrine in this place, yet it shall appeare afterward by Pauls narration, that Ananias was also commaunded to teach him, and by Baptisme which was later in order, we gather that he was instructed in the faith. Let the readers note out of the Chapter next going before, how this ceremonie is effectual to giue the Spirit. But seeing Paul receiued the Spirite by the hand of Ananias, the papistes are more than ridiculous, who will haue the Bishops alone to lay on their hands.

18 There fell from his eies as it had ben scales. The blindnesse of Paul, as we haue saide before, did not proceede from feare alone, or from amazement: but by this meanes was hee admonished of his former blindnesse, that he might quite abandon that boldnesse and vaine confidence wherewith hee was puffed vp. Hee boasteth that he was taught at the feete of Gamaliel: and vndoubtedly hee thought verie well of his great witnesse, which was notwithstanding meere blindnesse. Therefore hee is deprivied of the sight of his bodie threë dayes, that hee may beginne to see with his minde: for those must become fooles, whosoeuer they bee, which seeme to themselues wise, that they may attaine to true wisdome. For seeing that Christ is the sunne of righteousness, in seeing without him, we see not: it is he also which openeth the eyes of the minde. Both things were shewed to Paul, and to vs are they shewed in his person: for hee hath his eies couered with scales: that condemning all his knowledge of ignorance, he may learne that

that he hath neede of new light, which he hath hitherto wanted: and he is taught that he must set the true light from none other, saue only from Christ, and that it is giuen by no other meanes, saue onely through his goodnes. Furthermore whereas being pyned with three dayes hunger, he maketh no haste to receiue meat vntill he bee baptized, thereby appeareth the earnest desire he had to learne: because he refreshed not his body with meat, vntill his soule had receiued strength.

And Saul was with the disciples which were at Damascus, certaine dayes.

20 *And by and by he preached Christ, that he was the sonne of God.*

21 *And they were all amased which heard, and said: Is not this he, which at Ierusalem made hauke of those who called vpon this name, and hee came hither to that ende, that he might carry them bounde vnto the Priests?*

22 *And Saul waxed more strong, and confounded the Iewes which dwelt at Damascus, prouing that this was Christ.*

23 *And when many dayes were past, the Iewes tooke counsel together to put him to death:*

24 *And their laying in wait was knowne to Saul. And they kept the gates day and night, that they might slea him:*

25 *And the disciples hauing taken him by night, put him downe through a wal, and let him downe in a basket.*

20 Luke declareth now how fruitful Paul his conuerſion was: to wit, that he came abroad by and by: and did not onely professe that hee was a disciple of Christ, but did also set himselfe against the furie and hatred of the enimies, by defending the Gospel stoutly. Therefore hee who of late ran headlong against Christ with furious force, doth now not only submit himselfe meekely vnto his will and pleasure, but like a stout standard bearer fighteth euen vnto the vtmost daunger to maintain his glory. Certain it is, that hee was not so quickly framed by Ananias his industrie: but that so soone as hee had learned the first principles by mans mouth, he was extolled by God vnto higher things afterward. He comprehendeth the summe of his preaching briefly, when hee saith, That Christ was the sonne of God. In the same sense he saith shortly after, That he was Christ. And vnderstand thus much, that when Paul intreated out of the Law and the Prophets of the true office of the Messias, he taught also that al whatsoever was promised of, and was to be hoped for at the handes of the Messias, was reuealed and giuen in Christ. For the words signifie thus much, when he saith that he preached that Christ is the sonne of God. That was vndoubtedly a principle amongst the Iewes, that there shoulde a redeemer come from God, who shoulde restore all things to an happie estate. Paul teacheth that Iesus of Nazareth is hee: which he cannot do, vlesse he shake off those grosse errors, which he had conceiued of the earthly kingdome of the Messias. Certaine it is that Paule declared how Christ was promised in the Lawe, and to what end: but because all tended to this end, that hee might prouue that the sonne of Mary, was he of whom the Law and the Prophets bare witnes, therefore

therefore Luke is content with this one word onely.

21 *They were all amazed.* This is added, that wee may knowe that the power of God was acknowledged. For seeing that the zeale of Paul against the Gospel was openly knowne, they saw no other cause of such a sodaine chaunge, but the hand of God. And therefore this is also one suite of the myracle, that they all wonder at him being made a newe man so sodainly, so that his doctrine doth the more moue their minds. Whereas they say that hee raged horrible with great crueltie, and that he came of late to Damascus, that he might proceed in his purpose: these circumstances serue to augment the myracle. Wee must also note the phrase, *those* which call vpon this name: which witnesse that the godly did so professe the name of Christ, that they placed all their hope of saluation in him: according to that, These men put their trust in chariots, and others in horses, but we will call vpon the name of the Lord. Finally whatsoeuer the scripture commaundeth concerning calling vpon the name of God, it agreeth to the person of Christ.

22 *And Saul waxed stronger.* Luke doeth not onely in this place commend the bold zeale of Paule in confessing the faith of Christ: but also he telleth vs that he vsed strong reasons to conuince the Iewes: *He waxed strong*, saith he, that is, he gat the victorie in disputation, his confession did carrie with it great force and efficacie, because being furnished with testimonies of Scripture, and such other helpes of the holy Ghost, he did as it were tread all his aduersaries vnder his feete. For the word *confounded* which Luke vseth, doth signifie, That, for as much as Paul did vrge them out of measure, they were so stricken that they coule not tell where they were. The manner of the confounding is expressed, because Paul proued that Iesus was Christ. For the sense is this, that euen when the Iewes were most desirous to resist, they were ouercome & confounded. So that Paul tried by experience, that that was most true which he himselfe affirmeth, that the Scripture is profitable to conuince. Also he performed that which he required elsewhere, of a Bishop and teacher: for hee was armed with the word of God to maintaine the trueth. And Luke setteth down two things: that Paul so gate the victory in disputing, that he ouerthrew the Iewes: and yet their stubbernesse was not broken and tamed, that they yielded to the trueth: because their consciences rage neuerthelesse inwardly, and being throwne downe from their false opinion, they doe not submit themselues to Christ. Whence had Paule this victorie, saue onely because the Scripture was his sworde? Therefore so often as Heretikes stande vp to resist the true faith, so often as wicked men endeouour to ouerthrowe all godlinesse, so often as the vngodly doe obstinately resist, let vs remember that wee must set armour hence. Because the papists finde no weapons in Scripture, yea because they see that it maketh quite against them, they flie vnto this miserable fortresse, That they must not dispute with heretikes, And that there can no certaine thing be set downe out of Scripture. But if Satan himselfe be vanquished with the sword of the worde, why shall it not bee able to put heretikes to flight? not that they will submit themselues, or make an
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2.Tim.3.16.
Titus.1.7.

ende of murmuring: but because they shall lie ouercome in themselves. And if so be it wee couet to escape this trouble, let vs raise no tumults against God, but let vs with a quiet and meeke spirit receiue that peace which the Scripture offereth vs.

23 *When many dayes were fulfilled.* He saith that many dayes were expired: that we may know that Paul had some space of time granted him wherein he might doe good. For although the Iewes did resist him euen from the first day, yet the Lord did not suffer the course which hee had begunne well, to be broken off so soone, so he doth with his wonderfull counsell hinder the purposes of the enemies, stay their indeuours, re-straine their malice and madnesse, whiles that he furthereth the Gospel: and also we see what the hatred of the truth doth. For when the wicked see that they are vnable to resist, they are carried headlong vnto bloodie furie. They would gladly contemne the word of God, if they coulede: but because they are enforced whether they will or no, to feele the force thereof, they runne headlong like furious beasts with blinde violence. The vnaduised and rash heate of zeale will alwayes almost breake out into such crueltie vnlesse men suffer themselves to bee ruled by the worde of God. This is assuredly horrible blindness. For why are they so madde, saue onely because their wounded conscience doth vex them? But God doth by this meanes punish their hypocrisie: who doe therefore hate sounde religion, because being friends of darkness, they flie the light. Furthermore wee see howe sweetly these preposterous zealous fellows graunt themselves libertie to doe whatsoeuer them lusteth, when Satan hath once pricked them forward to persecute the truth. For they feare not to take counsell vnder colour of zeale, to put a man to death, which they knowe is meere wickednesse: as at this day the Papists thinke that they may do whatsoeuer they will, so they can quench the doctrine of the Gospel: they rage not only with sworde: but they goe about by laying in waite, by trecherie, and by most execrable meanes to destroy vs. We must first beware that that do not befall vs, that wee intangle not our selues in the defense of euill causes: secondly that we handle those causes wel, which we know are good. But it is to be thought that they laide wait for Paul priuily: that done, when they could do no good this way, it is likely that they came to the gouernor of the citie, and that then the gates were watched, that they might by one meanes or other catch him. For Paul saith, that Aretas the kings gouernour commaundeth that which Luke attributeth in this place to the Iewes.

25 *The disciples hauing taken him by night.* There is a question moued here, whether it were lawfull for the disciples to saue Paul thus or no? and also whether it were lawfull for Paul to escape danger by this means or no? For the Lawes say that the walles of cities are holy, and that the gates are holy. Therefore hee ought rather to haue suffered death than to haue suffered a publike order to bee broken for his sake. I answer that wee must consider why it is decreed by the Lawes that the walles shoulde not be violated: to wit, that the cities may not be laide open

open to murthers and robberies, and that the citizens may be free from treason. that reason ceaseth when the question is concerning the deliquerie of an innocent man. Therefore it was no lesse lawfull for the faithfull to let downe Paul in a basket, than it shalbe lawfull for any priuate person to leape ouer a wall, that he may auoide the sodaine inuasion of the enimie. Cicero doeth handle this later member, and he setteth downe very well, that although the Law forbid a straunger to come neere the wall, yet doth not he offende, who shal go vp vpon the wall to saue the Citie, because the lawes must alwayes bee inclined to equitie. Therefore Paul is not to be blamed, because he escaped by stealth, seing he might do that without raising any tumult amongst the people: Neuerthelesse we see how the Lord vseth to humble those that be his, seeing that Paule is enforced to steale his life from the watchmen of the Citie, if he will saue himselfe. Therefore he reckoneth this example amongst his infirmities, He was acquainted betime with the crosse with this first exercise, 2 Cor. 11. 32

- 26 And when Saul was at Ierusalem, hee assaied to ioine himselfe to the Disciples, and they were all afraid of him, not beleeuing that he was a disciple.
- 27 But when Barnabas had taken him, he brought him to the Apostles: and he tolde them, how that he had secne the Lord in the waye, and that he had spoken to him, and howe hee had behaued himselfe boldlie at Damascus, in the name of Iesus.
- 28 And he was conuersant with them at Ierusalem: And when he was imboldened in the name of the Lord Iesus,
- 29 Hee spake, and disputed with the Grecians. And they went about to kill him.
- 30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him to Cesarea, and sent him to Tharsus.
- 31 Then the Churches throughout al Iudca, and Galilee & Samaria had peace: and they were edified, and walked in the feare of the Lorde, and were filled with the consolation of the holy Spirit.

26 When Saul was. These were yet hard entrances for Paul who was as yet but a fresh water soldier: in that when hee had hardly escaped the hands of the enimies, the disciples would not receiue him. For he might haue seemed to haue beene so toft too and fro as it were in mockage, that he could haue no resting place: all his owne nation was set against him for Christes cause: the Christians refuse him: might hee not haue beene quite discouraged and out of hope, as one expelled out of mens companie? First, what remaineth, but that he fall away from the Church, seing he is not receiued? But when he remembreth the life which hee had led aforetime, hee maruelleth not that they are afraid of him. Therefore he doth patiently suffer the brethren to refuse his company, seeing they had iust cause of feare. This was true conuersion, that whereas he raged horribly before: he doth now valiantly suffer the stormes of persecutions: & in the meane season, whē as he cannot be admitted

admitted into the companie of the godly, he waiteth with a quiet mind; vntill God reconcile them vnto him. We must diligentlie note what he desireth: to wit, that he may be numbred amongst the disciples of Christ: this can he not obtaine, here is no ambition: but he was to be instructed by this meanes, to make more account euen of the lowest place amongst the disciples of Christ, than of all masterships in corrupt and reuoluted Synagogues. And from this submission was he exalted vnto the highest degree of honour, that he might be the principal doctour of the church, euen vnto the end of the world. But no man is fit to be a teacher in the Church, saue onely he who willingly submitteth himselfe, that hee may be a fellow discipule with other men.

27 *When Barnabas had taken him.* Whereas the disciples fled so fast from Paul, that was peradventure a point of too great fearefulness, and yet he speaketh of none of the common sort, but of the Apostles themselves. But he doth either extenuate or lighten their fault, because they suspected him for iust causes, whom they had founde and tryed to bee such a deadly enimie, and it was to be feared least they should rashly indanger themselves, if they should haue shewed themselves to bee so easie to intreat. Therefore I thinke that they are not to be blamed for that feare which they conceiued for iust cause, or that they deserue to be euen accused for the same. For if they had beene called to giue an account of their faith, they would haue prouoked not Paul onely, but also all the furies of hell, without feare. Whence we gather that euery feare is not to be condemned, but such as causeth vs to turne aside from our duty. The narration which Luke addeth may be referred as wel vnto the person of Barnabas as of Paul: yet I thinke rather that Paule declareth to the Apostles what had befallen him: and yet the speech may bee well applyed to Barnabas, especially when as mention is made of Paul his boldnes.

28 Luke saith afterward that Paul went in and out with the disciples: which speech signifieth amongst the Hebrewes familiaritie: as the inhabitants of Citties are said to go in and out at the gates of the cittie. Therefore after that Paul was commended by the testimonie of Barnabas, he began to be counted one of the flock, that he might be thoroughly knowne to the church. Luke saith againe, that he delt *boldly* in the name of the Lord: by which words he commendeth his stoutnes and courage in professing the Gospel. For hee durst neuer haue whispered amidst so manie lets, vnlesse he had beene endowed with rare constancie. Neuertheless all men are taught what they ought to doe: to wit, euery man according to the measure of his faith. For though all bee not Pauls, yet the faith of Christ ought to engender in our minds so great boldnesse, that we be not altogether dumbe, when we haue neede to speake. I take the name of the Lord in this place, for the profession of the Gospel: in this sense, that Paul defended Christs cause manfully.

29 *Hee disputed with the Grecians.* Erasmus noteth well in this place, that those are here called Grecians, not which came of Grecians, but rather those Iewes, who were scattered throughout diuers parts of the world. Those men were wont to come together to Ierusalem to worship.

And

And it is to be thought that Paul disputed rather with straungers and a-liants, than with those who dwelt at Ierusalem, because this latter sort would neuer haue abid him, neither had it bene wisely done to come in their sight. Therefore being excluded from those who knew him before, he tried whether there were any hope to doe good amongst men whom he knew not: so that he did most stoutly whatsoeuer concerned the duty of a valiant soldiari.

They would haue slaine him. Behold againe fury in steede of zeale: and it cannot otherwise be, but that hypocrisie and superstition will be cruel and fierce. The godly must be incensed with an holy wrath, when they see the pure truth of God corrupt with false and wicked opinions: yet so that they moderate their zeale, that they set downe nothing vntill they haue thoroughly weighed the cause: and secondly that they assaie to bring those into the way who wander out of the same. Lastly that if they see their stubbernesse to be past hope, they themselues take not the sworde in hande, because they must know that they haue no authoritie graunted them of the Lorde to punish or reuenge. But hypocrites are alwayes readie to shedde blood before they knowe the matter. So that superstition is bloodie through blind and headlong furie. But Paul who of late ranne vp and downe to vex the godly, can abide no where nowe. And yet this estate was farre better for him, than if he should haue reigned in peace and quietnes, driuing the godly euery where out of their places.

30 In that he went to *Tarsus*, he did it vndoubtedly to this end, that hee might carrie the doctrine of the Gospel thither: because hee hoped that he should haue some fauour and authority in his countrie, where he was famous: yet was he brought thither by the brethré, that they might deliuer him from the lying in wait.

31 *Then the Churches.* Luke his meaning is that the enimies of the Gospel were greatly prouoked by Paul his presense. For why was there such peace made sodainly by his departure, saue onely because the very sight of him did prouoke the furie of the enimies? And yet this is no reproch to him, as if he had beene as it were some trumpet in warre: but Luke doth rather commend him for this, because hee made the wicked runne madde, onely with the smell of him when hee was neere them. For Christ meant so to triumph in him, that he might be no lesse a trouble than an ornament to his Church. Therefore wee are taught by this example that those are not by and by to be condemned, who inflame the madnesse of the wicked more than others. Which admonition is not a little profitable. For as wee are too daintie and too much besotted with the loue of our owne rest, so we be also sometimes angrie with the best and most excellent seruants of Christ, if wee thinke that through their vehemencie the wicked are pricked forward to doe hurt. And by this meanes wee doe iniurie to the Spirite of God, whose force and speech kindleth all that flame. And whereas Luke saith that the Churches had peace, let vs knowe that it was not continuall, but because the Lorde graunted his seruants some short breathing. For thus

doth he beare with our infirmitie, when hee appeaseth or mittigateth the windes and stormes of persecutions, least if they should hold on still, they should vrge vs out of measure. And this blessing is not to be despised, neither is it any common blessing, when as the Churches haue peace. But Luke addeth other things which are of farre more valew: to wit, that the Churches were edified, they walked in the feare of God, and they were filled with the consolation of the Spirite. For as wee are wont to ryot and exceed in time of peace, the Churches are more happy for the most part, amidst the tumults of warre, than if they shoulde enioy what rest they would desire. But and if holy conuersation, and the consolation of the Spirit, whereby their state doeth flourish, be taken away: they loose not only their felicitie, but they come to nought. Therefore let vs learne not to abuse externall peace in banqueting and idleness: but the more rest wee haue giuen vs from our enemies, to encourage our selues to go forward in godlinesse, whiles we may. And if at any time the Lord let lose the bridle to the wicked to trouble vs, let the inwarde consolation of the spirite bee sufficient for vs. Finally as well in peace as in warre let vs alwayes ioyfully goe forward toward him who hath a reward for vs. *Edification* may be taken either for increase, to wit, whiles the Churches are augmented with the number of the faithfull, or for their going forward who are already in the flocke, to wit, whiles they haue new gifts giuen them, and haue greater confirmation of godliness. In the first signification it shall be referred vnto the persons: in the seconde vnto the giftes of the Spirite. I embrace both willingly: that there were some euer nowe and then gathered vnto the Church, who were straungers before, and those who were of the household of the Church, did increase in godlinesse and other vertues. Furthermore the metaphore of a building is verie conuenient, because the Church is the temple and house of God, and euerie one of the faithfull is also a temple. The two thinges which followe, that They walked in the feare of God, and that they were filled with the consolation of the Spirite, are partes of that edification. Therefore though the Churches had peace, yet they were not drunken with delights, and earthlie ioy, but trusting to Gods helpe, they were more emboldned to glorifie God.

1. Tim. 3. 15.

1. Cor. 3. 16.

19.

32 And it happened that whiles Peter walked through al, he came also vnto the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And he found there a man named Aeneas, who had laide in his bedde eighre yeres, who had the palfie.

34 And Peter saith vnto him: Aeneas, Iesus Christ make thee whole: Arise, and make thy bed. And forthwith he arose:

35 And all those which dwelt at Lydda, and Assaron, saw him, and were turned vnto the Lord.

32 Luke setteth downe howe the Church was encreased by myracles. And he reciteth two myracles: that a man who had beene bedred eight yeres hauing the palfie, was sodainly healed: and that a cer-

taine

taine woman was raised from death. First hee saith, that, As Peter walked throughout all, hee came to Lydda. And by All vnderstande not Churches, but the faithfull, because it is in Greeke of the Masculine gender, though that skilleth not much for the sense. And it was meete that the Apostles who had no certaine place of abode, shoulde wander hither and thither as occasion was offered, wherefore whiles they are all occupied in diuerse parts, Peter tooke vpon him this charge Whereby the foolishnesse of the Papistes is refuted, who gather Peter his primacie, by the authoritie which he had to visite. As if the rest of the Apostles did liue idly at Ierusalem like priuate men, when Peter did visite the Churches. Againe, admitte wee graunt that Peter was the chiefe Apostle, which thing the Scripture sheweth oftentimes, doth it thereupon follow that he was the head of the world? but would to God the Bishoppe of Rome, who will be counted Peter his successor, woulde trauell as hee did to animate the brethren, and woulde euerie where proue in deede that he is the Apostle of Christ. Nowe he which out of his throne doth with more than tyrannous Lordship oppress all the Churches, pretendeth that Peter did visit the Churches with great paines.

Which dwelt at Lydda. Lydda which was afterward called Diospolis, was situate not farre from the mediterranean sea, being a renowned citie as well for antiquitie as also for many giftes. Ioppa was nigh to this Citie, which had a famous haven, though very full of rockes. The Citie it selfe stood vpon an high cliffe, whence they might see to Ierusalem. At this day there is nothing to be seene there but the ruinous wals of the olde Citie, saue onely that the haven remaineth, which they call most commonly Iaphet. It should seeme that Luke nameth Assaron as some town or citie. Hierom readeth it Saron, and thinketh that thereby is meant the whole plaine lying betweene Cesaria and Ioppa. But because Ierom sheweth no reason, why hee should chaunge the reading which is commonly vsed, I admit that willingly which Luke his text sheweth mee, to wit, that it was a citie hard by. But I do not contend about this matter: as I do not ambitiously gather those things which may serue for a vaine brag: because it shalbe sufficient for the godly readers to knowe those things which make to Luke his meaning.

34 *Iesus Christ make thee whole.* It is certaine that the Apostles would neuer haue attempted the doing of myracles, vnlesse they had ben first certified of the will of God, whereupon the effect did depende. For they had no such power of the Spirite giuen them that they coulde heale whatsoeuer sicke persons they would: but as Christ himselfe vsed a measure in his myracles: so he woulde haue his Apostles to worke no more, than he knewe were profitable. Therefore Peter did not rashly breake out into these words: because hee might haue set himselfe to be laughed at, vnlesse he had alredy known the wil of God. It may be that he praied apart. The Spirit who was the authour of all myracles, and which wrought by the hande of Peter, did euen then direct his tongue, and did moue his heart by a secreat inspiration. And in these wordes

Peter sheweth plainly that he is onely the minister of the myracle, and that it proceedeth from the power of Christ: that he may by this means extoll the name of Christ alone.

Make thy bedde. These circumstances doe amplify the glorie of the myracle, in that he doeth not onely recouer strength to rise, but is also able to make his owne bedde, who could moue no member before. To the same ende tendeth the continuance of the disease: for a palsie of eight yeeres continuance is not easily cured. In like sort is hee saide to haue laid in his bed, that we may know that all his members were lamed: for it was a little bed wherein they were wont to rest at noone. Whereas Eneas was so readie to make trial of his members, hee thereby declared the obedience of his faith. For although hee perceiued the strength which was giuen him, yet he was most of all moued with the efficacie of the words, to rise.

35 *And all those.* His meaning is that the myracle was published abroad, and was knowne throughout the whole citie. For when the scripture saith, *All*, it doth not comprehend euery one howe many so euer it noteth: but it putteth *All* for the more part, or for many, or for the common sort of men. Therefore the sense is, that, whereas there was but a small number of Godly men there, a great part of the people became members of the Church. And in this clause is expressed the fruit of the myracle, because they embraced Christ and his Gospel. Wherefore those men corrupt myracles, whosoever they be which looke onely vpon men, & do not turne their eies toward this end, that being instructed concerning the power and grace of Christ, they may sticke only to him. Therefore that token of Christs diuine power which hee shewed, was the beginning of turning to him.

36 *And there was a certaine disciple at Ioppa, called Tabitha, which if you interpret it, is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almes which shee did.*

37 *And it happened in those dayes, that shee was sicke and died. And when they had washed her, they laid her in an vpper parlour.*

38 *And for as much as Lydda was neere to Ioppa, the disciples who had heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him requesting him that he would come to them.*

36 There followeth a more famous token of Christs power, by howe much it is more hard to restore life to a dead body, than to restore helth to a man that is sicke. But Luke doth first commend the person of Tabitha on whom the myracle was shewed, and that with a double title: to wit, that shee was Christs disciple, and that shee approued her faith with good workes and almes. Hee hath oftentimes already put this word *Disciple* for a Christian man: and least we should thinke that that name was proper to men onely, he attributeth the same to a woman. And this title teacheth vs, that Christianity cannot be without doctrine: & that that forme of learning is prescribed, that the same Christ may be master to al.

This

This is the chiefest praise, this is the beginning of holy life, this is the roote of all vertues, to haue learned of the sonne of God, the way to liue, and the true life. The fruits of good works proceed afterward from faith. By good works, I meane the dueties of loue, wherewith our neighbours are holpen: and Luke placeth the chiefe kinde in Almes. The commendation of liberalitie is great, because as the holy Ghost doeth witnesse, it containeth in it selfe the summe of a godly and perfect life. Now we see what titles Thabita hath. For religion toward God or faith goeth first, secondly that she exercised her selfe in helping the brethren, and specially in releeuing the pouertie of the poore. For by vs it is come to passe, that all that helpe wherewith the poore and those which are in misery are holpen, is called *Eleemosyna*. Thabita is rather a Syrian word than an Hebrew, which Luke did turne into Greek, that we might know that it was not like to the vertues of the holy women, and that shee was debased in such a simple name. For Dorcas signifieth a goat: but the holines of her life did easily wipe away the blotte of a name not verie seemely.

37 *It hapned that she was sicke.* He saith in plaine words that shee was sicke, that he may the more plainly expresse her death which followed. To the same end, he saith that the corps was *washt*, and laid in an vpper chamber. Therefore these circumstances serue to make the myracle to be beleeued. Whereas they carry her not streight way to the graue, but lay her in the vpper part of the house, that they may keep her there, we may thereby gather that they had some hope of recouering her life. It is likely that the rite of washing, whereof Luke maketh mention, was most auncient. And I doe not doubt but that it came from the holy fathers by cōtinual course of times, as if it had bin deliuered from hand to hand, that in death it selfe some visible image of the resurrection might comfort the minds of the godly, and lift them vp vnto some good hope: to wit, seeing the manifestation of eternall life was not so euident, yea seeing that Christ the pledge and substance of eternal life, was not as yet reuealed, it was requisite that both the obscuritie of doctrine, and also the absense of Christ should be supplied by such helpes. Therefore they washed the bodies of the deade, that they might once stand before the iudgement seat of God being cleane. Finally there was the same reason for washing the deade, which was for the liuing: the dayly washing put them in minde of this, that no man can please God, saue he who should be purged from his filthynes. So in the rite of burying, God would haue some signe extant, whereby men might be admonished, that they went polluted out of this life, by reason of that filthines which they had gathered in the world. Washing did no more help those which were dead, than buriall; but it was vsed to teach the liuing. For because death hath some shew of destruction, least it should extinguish the faith of the resurrection, it was requisite that contrary shewes should bee set against it, that they might represent life in death. The Gentiles also tooke to themselves this Ceremonie. For which cause Ennius saith, *A good woman did wash and anoynt Tarquinus his corps.* But their imitation was but apish in
this

this thing as in all other Ceremonies. And Christians also haue taken to themselves this example vnaduisedly: as if the obseruation of a figure vsed vnder the Lawe ought to continue alwayes. For at the beginning of the Gospel, although the necessitie were abolished, yet the vse was lawfull, vntill such time as it might growe out of vse in tract of time. But the munkes do at this day no lesse imitate Iudaisme, then did the Gentiles in times past, without choise and iudgement. For they wash corpses that they may bury Christ in shadowes, which being buried with him in his graue, ought neuer to haue bene vsed any more.

38 *The disciples which had hearde.* The washing of the corpses sheweth that the disciples knew not what would come to passe. For by this means they make the corps readie to be buried. Yet this is some token of hope, that they lay her in an vpper Chamber, and send to Peter. Furthermore they murmur not against God, neither do they crie out that it is an vnmeete thing; but they humbly craue Gods help: not that they wil make Thabita immortall, but their onely desire is to haue her life prolonged for a time, that she may yet profit the Church.

39 *And Peter arose and came with them, whom when he was come, they brought into the vpper chamber, and all the wydowes stood about her weeping; and shewing the coates and garments, which Dorcas made, when shee was with them.*

40 *And when they were all put out, Peter kneeled downe and prayed: and turning himselfe toward the coarfe, hee saide: Thabita arise. And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she saie vp.*

41 *And hee reached out his hande and lift her vp; and when hee had called the saints and wydowes, he restored her aliu.*

42 *That was noised through all Ioppa, and manie belcened in the Lord.*

43 *And it happened that he staid many dayes at Ioppa with a certaine man, named Simon a tanner.*

39. *And Peter arose.* It is doubtfull whether the messengers declared to Peter the matter and cause why they set him: yet it is more like to be true, that they requested him absolutely, that he would come to work a myracle. But there ariseth another question, Whether hee knew Gods purpose or no. First, if he should mistrust the successe, hee shoulde goe with them vnaduisedly. I answere, Although he did not yet know, what the Lord would doe, yet can hee not be blamed for yeelding to the request of the brethren. Also there were other reasons why hee shoulde come: to wit, to mitigate their sorrowe: to strengthen them with godly exhortations, least they shoulde faint, being discouraged with the death of one woman: to establish the Church which was as yet tender and but as it were an infant. Lastly this one thing ought to haue bene sufficient for him, because in refusing he shuld haue ben thought proudly to despise his brethren, notwithstanding we must know this also, that so often as the Lorde determined to worke some myracle by his Apostles, he did alwayes direct them by the secreat motion of the Spirit. I do

not

not doubt but that although Peter were not yet certaine of the life of Thabita, yet did he vndoubtedly perceiue that God was his guide and conductor in that iorney: so that he addressed himselfe to go not vnadvisedly, though being vncertaine of the euent.

All the widowers. Luke expresseth in this place, the causes, for which Thabita was raised from death: to wit, because God pittied the poore, and did at their desire restore the woman to life. There were also other ends: for seing the liueth two liues, those vertues which Luke commended before, are adorned in her person: but the chiefe ende is, that the glorie of Christ may bee set forth. For God coulde haue kept her aliu longer, neither doth he chaunge his purpose, as being mouued with repentance, when he doth restore her to life againe, but because many of the disciples were weake and nouices, who had neede of confirmation, God declareth by the second life of Thabita, that his Sonne is authour of life. Therefore, God did respect the poore and widowes in such sort, that by releeuing their pouertie hee established in their mindes the faith of his Gospel. For in this myracle hee gaue ample matter of profiting.

40 *When they were all put forth.* When as he taketh a time to pray, he seemeth as yet to doubt, what will be the ende. When he healed Æneas as he brake out into these wordes without making any stoppe, Æneas, Iesus Christ make thee whole. But as the operation of the Spirit is not alwaies alike and the same, it may be that though he knew the power of God; yet he went forward vnto the myracle by degrees. Yet it seemeth to be an absurde thing, that he putteth all the Saintes out of the chamber, for whom it had bene better to haue seene it with their eyes, but because the Lorde had not as yet reuealed the time when, and the manner how he would shew forth his power, hee desireth to bee alone, that he might the more fitly pray. Also it might be that he knew some other reason which moued him to doe this, which we know not. It is recorded in the sacred history that Eliseus did the same: for hee being alone, and not so much as the mother of the child with him, doth stretch himselfe thrise vpon the dead corps. For the Spirit of God hath his vehement motions, which if any man wil square out according to the common vse of men, or measure by the sense of the flesh, he shal do wickedly and vniustly. We must this think: when as Peter, as it were douting, seeketh a by place, he preuenteth superstition, least any man should ascribe to his power the worke of God, whereof he was onely a minister. For he which withdrew himselfe from company, and did pray so instantly, did plainly confesse that the matter was not in his own hand. Therefore when Peter waireth to know what pleaseth the Lord, he confessed that he alone was the author of the worke. Kneeling in time of praier is a token of humilitie, which hath a double profite: that all our members may be applied vnto the worship of God: and that the externall exercise of the body may helpe the weakenesse of the mind. But we must take heede so often as we kneele downe, that the inwarde submission of the heart be answerable to the ceremonie, that it be not vaine and false.

2. King. 14.
32.

Ezec. 37. 4.
Iohn 5. 28.

Turning toward the corps. This seemeth also to bee contrary to reason, that hee speaketh vnto a corps without feeling. But this speaking vnto the dead corps, was one point of the vehemency, whereunto the Spirit of God enforced Peter. And if any man desire a reason, this forme of speech doth more liuely expresse the power of God in raising the deade, than if it should be said in the thirde person, Let this body receiue life againe and liue. Therefore when as Ezechiel doeth shadowe the deliuerance of the people vnder a figure of the resurrection: O deade bones (saith he) heare the word of the Lord. And Christ saith, The time shall come when the dead shall heare the voice of the sonne of God. For this was in deed the voice of Christ, which was vttered by the mouth of Peter, and gaue breath to the body of Thabita. The circumstances following, serue to cōfirm the certainty of the myracle.

Phil. 1. 21.

41. Luke repeateth againe in the end that she was shewed openly to the disciples. Whence we gather, that she was raised againe, ratlier for other mens sake, than for her owne. Brainicke fellowes, who dreame that the soule of man is onely a blast, which vanisheth away vntill the day of the resurrection, snatch at this place, to proue their doting withall. To what ende was it (say they) to call backe the soule of Thabita into the prison of the body, where it shoulde suffer such misery if it were receiued into blessed rest? As if it were not lawfull for God to haue respect of his glorie, as well in death as in life: and as if this were not the true felicitie of the godly, to liue and die to him: yea as if Christ were not to vs a vantage, as well by lyuing as dying, when wee dedicate our selues to him. Therefore there shall no inconuenience follow, if the Lord had greater respect to his owne glory, than to Thabita: although as the commodity of the faithfull is alwayes annexed to the glory of God, this turned to her greater good, that she reuiued, that she might be a more excellent instrument of Gods goodnes and power.

42. *And manie beleened.* Now appeare manifold fruits of the myracle. For God comforted the power, a godly matron was restored to the Church, in whose death it suffered great losse, and many are called vnto the faith. For although Peter were a minister of so great power, yet he keepeth not the men in himselfe: but doeth rather direct them vnto Christ.

43. When as he saith that Peter dwelt with a tanner, we may hereby gather, of what manner men the Church of Ioppa did consist. For if the chieftaines of the Citie had beene conuerted to Christ, some one of them would haue lodged Peter. For it had bene too cruell a thing to suffer an Apostle of Christ to bee so despyed. Therefore the Lorde did gather together there as euery where, a Church, of the common sort of men, that he might throwe downe the pride of the flesh: and also thereby appeareth Peter his curtesie, in that he vouchsafeth to lodge with a man of that calling. Although it seemeth that he was rather a merchant of some good estimation, than one of the basest sort of workemen, for Luke will say afterward, that ther were there some which ministered vnto Peter: whereby it appeareth that he was well and honestly vsed.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

- 1 **A**ND there was a certaine man of Cesarea named Cornelius, a captaine of
the band which was called the Italian band:
- 2 A deuout man and one that feared God with his whole household, and one
which gaue almes to all the people, and which prayed to God continually.
- 3 He saw plainly in a vision about the ninth houre of the day, an angel of God
comming in vnto him, and saying to him, Cornelius,
- 4 And beholding and being afraid, he said: What is it Lord? Then he saide to
him, Thy prayers and thy almes are come vp into remembrance before God.
- 5 And now send men to Ioppa, and set Simon, which is called Peter:
- 6 He lodgeth with Simon a Tanner, whose house lyeth to the Sea, he shal tel thee
what thou must doe.

I Luke passeth ouer now vnto a worthie historie: to wit, that God vouchsafed to aduance a straunger, and one vncircumcised vnto singular honour aboue all the Iewes: because he doth both send his angel vnto him, and for his sake bringeth Peter to Cesarea, that he may instruct him in the Gospel. But first of all Luke sheweth what maner person this Cornelius was, for whose cause an angel descended from heauen, and God spake to Peter in a vision. He was a captaine of the Italian band. A band did consist vpon a thousand footemen, & he which was chief captaine, was called a Tribune or Marshal. Againe, euery hundreth had a captaine. A legion had for the most part fise bands. That band was called the Italian bande, because the Romanes did choose souldiers oftentimes from amongst those which dwelt in the prouinces, but they had the strength of the armie out of Italie. Therefore Cornelius was an Italian borne. But he liued at Cesarea with his hundred, to gard the citie. For the Romanes were woont so to distribute their places of abode: that euery citie of renowme might haue a garrison to stay sodaine vprours. A rare example that a souldier was so deuout toward God, so vpright and courteous toward men. For at that time the Italians, when as they were carried into the prouinces to liue in warfare, ranne to and fro like hungrie wolues to get som pray: they had for the most part no more religion than beasts: they had as great care of innocencie as cutthrores: For which cause the vertues of Cornelius deserue the greater commendation, in that leading a souldiers life which was at that time most corrupt: he serued God holily, and liued amongst men without doing any hurt or iniurie. And this is no small amplification of his praise, in that casting away superstition wherein he was borne and brought vp, he embraced the pure worship of God. For wee know what account the Italians made of themselues, and how proudly they despised others. And the Iewes were at that time in such contempt, that for their sakes pure religiō was coured infamous, & almost execrable. Seing that none of these thinges could hinder Cornelius, but that forsaking his Idols, he did embrace the true worship of the true God alone: it must needes be that he was endued with rare and singular sinceritie. Moreouer he could finde
scarcely

scarce any thing amongst the Iewes, wherwith he could be allured vnto the studie of godlinesse: because there was then scarce one amongst a thousand which had euen some small smattering of the lawe. And vndoubtedly Cornelius had light vpon som good worshipper of God, who beeyng sounde from corrupt opinions, did expounde vnto him the lawe faithfully, without mixing any leauen therewith. But because Luke giueth him manie titles of commendation, we must note them all.

2 Hee saith that he was a godly man, and one that feared God: secondly, that like a good housholder he had a care to instruct his familie: he prayeth him afterwarde for the offices of loue, because he was beneficiall toward all the people: and lastly, that he prayed God continually. The summe is this, that Cornelius was a man of singular vertues, wherein the integritie of the godly consisteth, so that his life was framed in all points according to the rule which God prescribeth vnto vs. And because the lawe is contained in two tables: Luke comendeth in the former place Cornelius his godlinesse: secondly hee descendeth vnto the second part, that he exercised the offices of loue toward men. This is very profitable to be marked, because we haue a way to liue well described in his person.

Wherefore in orderiing the life well, let faith and religion bee the foundation, which being taken away, all other vertues are nothing els but smokes. Luke reckoneth vp the feare of God and prayer, as frutes & testimonies of godlinesse and of the worship of God, and that for good causes. For religion cannot bee separated from the feare of God & the reuerence of him: neither can any man be counted godly, saue he who acknowledging God to be his father & Lord, doth addict himself wholly to him. And let vs knowe, that voluntarie feare is commended in this place, when those men submit themselues to God willingly and fro their heart, who duely consider with themselues what is due to him.

Moreouer, because a great part of the worlde doth with feigned trifles corrupt and depraue the worshippe of God, Luke addeth for good causes that Cornelius prayed continually: wherby he doth signifie, that he proued not his godlinesse only with externall ceremonies, but that he worshipped God spiritually, when as he exercised himselfe in prayer. We must also note the continuance of his prayer: whence wee gather, that he did not pray only coldlie, after the common custome, but that he was earnestly bent to prayer, as the continuall benefites of God doe exhort vs and pricke vs forward thereunto, and the force of faith ought there to shewe it selfe. Wherefore let euery one of vs exhort himselfe to perseuer in praier, by the example of Cornelius.

Wish all his house. We must not lightly passe ouer this commendation, that Cornelius had a church in his house. And surely a true worshipper of God, will not suffer so much as in him lyeth, God to bee banished from his house. For how vnmeet a thing is it, for him to maintaine his owne right stoutly, that his wife, children, seruantes, and maides, may obey him: and not to regard that God is disobeied. It shall sometimes fall out so, that a godly man cannot haue euen his wife to be of his minde:

minde: yet he which ruleth others, must indeuour by all means to haue God obeyed: and there is nothing more meete, then that wee shoulde consecrate all ours to God, as our selues. Therefore if a godly man haue children, which are vnlike him, or a wife of euill conditions: or lewd and wicked seruants: let him not winke, ne yet suffer his house to bee polluted through his slouthfulnesse. The diligence of Cornelius is not so much commended as the blessing of God: whereby it came to passe that hee hadde his house obedient vnto him in godlinesse. And wee must not omit the circumstance, that hee instructed his familie in the feare of God, setting light by the feare of daunger, which did hang ouer his head: therefore. For the Iewish religion was in great contempt: and no citizen of Rome might freely receiue any straunge religion as they called it. Wherefore although the sincere profession of the gospel be euill spoken of in the world: yet is it too corrupt freghtfulnesse, if that vniust hatred hinder any man, from offering his family to God for a sacrifice, by godly instruction.

Giuing almes. There is also the figure Synecdoche in this member. For as it was saide euen now that the worshippe of God was proued by prayers: so now whē Luke speket of loue he maketh choice of one kind: wherby he sheweth that Cornelius was a liberal and bountifull mā. For our godlinesse ought so to appeare to men, that we declare that we feare God, by vsing bountifulnesse and iustice. The word *almes* is translated vnto those externall good workes wherewith we help the poore, forasmuch as *miserēcordia* or mercy, is the inward affection of the hart properly. For from this fountain springeth true and well ordered bountifulnesse, if the troubles and sorrowes of our brethren doe moue vs to compassion: if considering the vnitie which is amongst vs, we foster and cherishe them. Isa. 58.7. as we would cherishe our own flesh, and studie to help them as we would helpe our owne members. Hypocrites are in deed sometimes liberall, or at least bountifull: but howsoeuer they waste all, yet no reliefe whiche they shall bestowe vpon the poore, shall be whorthie to be called by the name of almes. For we must holde that of Paul, He which hath no loue is nothing though he giue all his goods to the poore. Let vs therefore 1. Cor. 13.3. learne by this worde, that God doth then allow our liberalitie, if wee releue the pouertie of the poore being moued with compassion, and if as it were with open bowels we bestowe that which the liberalitie of God doth giue. Whereas Luke saith, that he gaue almes to *all* the people it signifieth as much, as euery where to the poore. For there were not a few rich men, to whō to haue giuen had byn an absurd thing. But whereas he bestowed so liberally vpon the Iewes, he declared, how he agreed with thē in religiō: in which respect Luke saith shortly after that he was allowed of all the Iewes. And if so be it he was such an excellent mirror of godlines & holines euen when he had but a small smattering of faith, although he wer letted so many waies, ought not we to be ashamed who will be accounted most christian doctors, & are yet so cold in the exercises of godlines. If a smal sparkle of faith preuailed so much in him, what ought the ful brightnes of knowledge to work in vs? but howsoeuer we boast of Christ with full mouth, yet how farr e are wee for the most part from the example

Example of the holy man, so that there appeareth scarce a smal shadow of those vertues wherewith he was replete. For how loose are we in prayer? how slow and sluggish to doe the duties of mercie? Yea many are not onely letted with filthinesse and couetousnesse, from giuing liberally so much of that which is their owne as they ought: but they are so inflamed with a desire to haue, they are become so beastly through crueltie, that they are not afraid to robbe the poore of their substance, and to eat their very flesh.

3 *He saw in a vision.* Luke putteth Vision for a kinde of oracle coming from god, that we may know that Cornelius was brought vnto the faith of Christ after an heavenly manner. And because men are oftentimes deceiued with iuggling, Luke setteth downe the time to auoid all suspicion, when he mentioneth the *ninth houre*. And at that time they were wont to deuide the day into twelue houres: from the rising of the Sunne vntill the going downe thereof. Whereupon it followeth that it was fayre day light when the Angell appeared, that the vision might be more euident. Although there were alwayes scales added vnto visions, that they might free the seruants of God from feare of illusions: because when he appeared in dreames, yet were there suche markes of certainty imprinted in their minds as would not suffer them to doubt.

4 *And he beheld, and was afraid.* Luke expresth his attentiuenesse in plain words, that we may know that it was no vaine imagination, which came vpon the man as he was sleeping or doing some other thing. The fear wherewith he was takē, proceeded from the perceiuing of the maiestie of God. For so sone as men conceiue the presence of God, they must needes be afraide and cast downe with feare. And whereas his worde doth no whit terrifie vs, that must be imputed to our sluggishnes, because we do not know nor perceiue that it is god which speket. But the godly to whom God reuealeth himself in his worde, doe tremble when they heare it, as Isaias saith. Furthermore, the sight of God is vnto them terrible, not that they may alwaies lye confounded, and be swallowed vp of feare, but onely that they may humbly addresse them selues to reuerence him.

What is it Lord? It appeareth plainly by this answere, that Cornelius his minde was touched with religion, that he knew that he had to deale with god. Therefore the comō translation hath it euil, *Who art thou Lord?* And it is likely that that which is there read, was put in in steede of this, for asmuch as in the Greeke text there is no doubtfulnesse, whereby the interpreter might be deceiued, & all the coppies agree together in this reading, *Ti esti*. And assuredly when Cornelius perceiueth that it is God, he submitteth himselfe to obey: as the answere is nothing but a commandement.

Thy prayers and almes. Because God seemeth to bee after a sort deafe, vlesse he answere our petitions by and by, hence commeth that speech that our prayers come vnto him; and that he is mindefull thereof. Furthermore, the angel assigneth this as the cause why God vouchsafeth to shew to Cornelius the light of his Gospel: because hee hath hearde his prayers.

praiers, and accepted his almes. Whence we gather that vertues & good,
 workes doe not only please God, but that they are also adourned with
 this excellent rewarde, that hee heapeth vpon vs & enricheth vs, with
 greater giftes for their sakes: according to that, To him that hath shall,
 be giuen. And againe, Well done good and faithfull seruauent: thou hast,
 byn faithful in a few things, I will set thee ouer many things. For God,
 doth after this sort extol his by a continuall course of his gifts as it were,
 by certaine steppes, vntill he bring them to the top. But the Papiſts abuse
 this place two waies: for because God respected the prayers and almes
 of Cornelius, so that he endued him with the faith of the Gospel, they
 wrest that vnto the preparations which they haue inuented, as if a man
 did get faith by his owne industrie and power, and did preuent the grace
 of God by the merites of workes. Secondly, they gather generally, that
 good workes are meritorious in such sort, that the graces of GOD are
 encreased in euery man as he hath deserued. In the former they are too
 childishly deceiued, whiles that they feigne that the workes of Corneli-
 us were acceptable to God, before he was illuminate by faith. And wee
 neede not to set a proof farre to refute their ignorance: for he could ob-
 taine nothing by prayer, vnlesse faith went before, which only openeth
 the gate for vs to pray: and Augustine weigheth that well & wisely, who
 derideth Pelagius, because he said, that faith was obtained by prayers,
 before it was in man in any measure: Who (saith he) will seeke a Phisitiō,
 saue he who is already healed in some part? And it is the health of faith
 which teacheth vs to knocke. Furthermore, the feare of God and godli-
 nesse doe plainely proue that he was regenerate by the Spirite. For Eze-
 chiel giueth this praise to God alone, that he frameth the hearts of men
 to feare him. And Esaias saith, that the Spirit of the feare of God resteth
 in Christ, that we may know that he can be found no where saue only in
 his members. Therefore it is too great folly to feigne a man in the per-
 son of Cornelius, who hauing nature for his guide can attaine vnto eter-
 nall life, or indeuour to come thither. Therefore they reason blockishly,
 that we are able to preuent the grace of God with the merites of works.
 As touching the second error, when as they imagine that euery one of
 vs is increased with greater graces as he hath deserued, it may easily be
 refuted. First, we denie that we haue any good works, which God hath
 not freely giuen vs: secondly, we say that the right vse of giftes commeth
 from him also, and that this is his second grace that wee vse his former
 giftes well. Thirdly, we denie that we deserue any thing by our workes,
 which are alwayes lame and corrupt. Good workes do in deed purchase
 for vs the encrease of grace, but not by their owne desert. For they can-
 not be acceptable to God without pardon, which they obtain by the be-
 nefite of faith. Wherefore it is faith alone which maketh them accept-
 able. Thus did Cornelius obtaine more perfect knowledge of Christ by
 his prayers and almes: but in that he had god to be fauourable and mer-
 cifull to his prayers and almes, that did depend vpon faith. Furthermore
 if good workes be esteemed by faith, it is of mercy and not of merit that
 God doth allow them. For because faith findeth no worthie thing in vs,
 wherby

Mat. 13. 12.
& 21. 25.

Eze. 32. 40.
Esa. 11. 2.

whereby we can please God, it borroweth that of Christ which we want. And this is to peruersers, that though the Papists haue this worde *merite*, euer now and than in their mouthes, and cease not to puffed vpper fooles with a vaine confidence, yet they bring nothing, whereby the studies of me may be moued to doe well. For they leaue their consciences alwaies in a doubt: and commaund men to doubt whether their workes please God or no. Must not mens mindes needs faint when they are possessed with such fear? But as for vs, though we take merit from works, yet when as we teach that there is a reward laid vp for them, we prick me forward with an excellent & sharpe pricke, to desire to liue well. For we addresse our selues then ioyfully to serue God, when wee are perswaded that wee loose not our labour. And whereas there appeareth at this day no more plentiful abundance of the giftes of the Spirit, but that the more part doth rather wither away, we must thank our vnthankfulnes for that. For as God did crowne Cornelius his prayers & almes, & holinesse with the most precious pearle of his Gospel: so there is iust cause why he shoulde suffer vs to starue, being brought vnto hungrie pouertie, when as he seeth vs abuse the treasure of his gospel wickedly and vngodlily. Yet here may a questiō be asked, Whether faith require the knowledge of Christ, or it be content with the simple perswasio of the mercy of god? For Cornelius seemeth to haue known nothing at all concerning Christ. But it may be proued by sounde proofes, that faith cannot bee separated from Christ. For if we lay hold vpon the bare maiestie of God, wee are rather confounded with his glory, then that we feele any taste of his goodnesse. Therefore Christ must come betweene, that the mind of man may conceiue that God is mercifull. And it is not without cause that he is called the image of the inuisible God: because the father offereth himselfe to be beholden in his face alone. Moreouer, seeing that hee is the way, the truth, & the life, whether soeuer thou goest without him, thou shalt bee inwrapped on euerie side in errours, and death shall meete you on euery side. We may easily answer concerning Cornelius. All spiritual gifts are offered vnto vs in Christ. And especially whence commeth regeneratio, saue only because whe we are ingrafted into the death of Christ, our old man is crucified? And if Cornelius were made partaker of the Spirit of Christ, ther is no cause why we shuld think that he was altogether void of his faith: nether had he so imbraced the worship of the true god (who the Iewes alone did worship) but that he had also hard somewhat of the promised mediator: though the knowlege of him were obscure, & intangled, yet was it some. Whosoever came at that time into Iudea, he was enforced to heare somewhat of the Messias: yea there was soim fame of him spread through countries which were far of. Wherefore Cornelius must be put in the catalogue of the old fathers, who hoped for saluation of the redeemer before hee was reuealed. And it is properly said of Augustine, thar Peter grounded his faith: whereas it hadde nowe before a firme foundation: although Augustine thinketh as wee do in the thing it selfe, who affirmeth plainly that Cornelius coule not pray vnlesse hee had faith: in his booke of the predestination of Sainctes and other

Col. 1. 15.

Iohn, 14. 6.

Rom. 6. 5. 6.

other places.

5 Now send to Ioppe. God dealt most fauourably with Cornelius in that he doth not commaund him to goe himself, but to send messengers vnto Peter, that he may stay quietly at home, & that Peter may indure the toyle of the journey for his sake. But let vs not wonder that Cornelius was so courteously handled, seeing that God thrusteth the ministers of his worde daily vpon the eunwilling: so that he appeareth of his accord to those which doe not seeke him as he saith by Isaias. But why doth not the Angell rather teache him? For this seemeth an inconuenient thing that he resigneth his office to a mortall man: for the oracle should haue had greater authoritie, then when the gospell is preached to him by a mortall man. As when Christ appeared to Paule by a vision, hee set notwithstanding Ananias to teach him, that he might by such an example establish the ministerie of the preaching of the gospel, which he committed to his church: so now the Angel giueth place to Peter, that hee may execute the office committed vnto him by Christ. I herfore whosoever will be the disciple of Christ, & be illuminate by the heauely light of the heauenly wisdom, let him not grudge to vse attentiuenesse and docilitie toward the externall voyce of men, which Christe vseth as an instrument, and whereunto he will haue our faith annexed. And wee see how sore God hath punished their furious pride, who contemning preaching, haue looked for reuelations from heauen. For sithence God will be heard in men, the ministers to whom he hath giuen his word can not bee contemned without contempt and reproch of him. Neuer the lesse, I cōfesse that the spirits must be proued, that we hear not without choise, whosoever doe pretend that they are the ministers of Christe. But because faith commeth by hearing, no man shall attaine thereunto, which shall refuse and despise the worde when it is preached.

Isa. 63. 1.

Acts. 9. 10.

1. Ioh. 4. 1.

Rom. 10. 17.

- 7 And after that the Angell which spake to Cornelius was departed, hee called two of his seruants, and a godly souldiar, of those which did wait on him:
- 8 And when he had told them all things, he sent them to Ioppe,
- 9 On the morrow, as they iourneied, and drew nigh to the citie, Peter went vp into the highest part of the house to pray, about the sixt houre.
- 10 And he was fasting. Therefore he would eate. And in the meane season while they made readie, there fell vpon him an excesse of minde:
- 11 He saw heauen open, and a vessell comming downe vpon him like to a greatesheet, knit at the foure corners, and let downe to the earth.
- 12 Wherein were all foure footed beasts of the earth, and wilde beasts, and creeping things, and birds of heauen.
- 13 And there came a voyce to him: Arise Peter, kill and eate.
- 14 And Peter said, Not so Lord: because I haue neuer eaten any common or vncleane thing.
- 15 And the voyce said to him againe. Make not thou those things cōmon which God hath made cleane.
- 16 And this was done thrise, and the vessell was taken vp againe into heauen.

7 And

Mat. 7. 7.

7 *And after that the Angell.* Luke declareth here how readie Cornelius was to obey: when as hee maketh no tariance, but doth that with all diligence, which he was commaunded to doe. And this was the cause that hee was so forwarde, because hee beleueed the promise: as want of faith is the cause why we are so slowe to followe God. Angels come not flying to vs from heauen, that they may appoint vs certaine men: but that voice of Christ soundeth in all mens eares. Seeke, and yee shal find, knock, & it shalbe opened vnto you. How is it that of an hundreth scarce one or two wil stirre one foot, that some creepe so little that they profite but a little, but because we doe not in deed beleuee the promise? Therefore let vs learne that we must not driue off from day to day, but euery man must hasten thither whither he is called, so soone as he heareth the voice of God.

Two of his seruants. Cornelius had this reward for beeing so diligent in teaching his family, that he had faithfull and honest seruantes who were willing to do him seruice: and also such as that he might comit any thing to them. On the other side, the Lord doth oftentimes punish masters with iust punishments, who haue no regarde to instruct their families. For they finde those iustly stubborne and vnfaithfull, whome they would not frame vnto godlines and the feare of God, and also they are afraid of their treacherie.

A godly souldiar. Forasmuch as this souldiar was muche conuersant with Cornelius, hee had also taught him to feare God, as well as his houshold seruants. It is meete that we call to minde here, that which I touched before, That there is no kinde of life which excuseth vs, but that we must worship god purely. For a souldiars life was at that time most corrupt; for they were fallen vnto filthie licentiousnesse, from the auncient discipline, and yet the Spirite of God beareth recorde in this place of the godlinesse of souldiars. Wherefore there is no cause why they shoulde require a calling that is free from worshipping God, vnder colour of warfare, who woulde by one meanes or other bee free from all righteousnesse. If they denie that they can serue God, because they bee souldiars: they shal haue these two souldiars meete iudges and witnesses against them at the last day, who shal condemne them. And in the mean season those brainsicke felowes are condemned, who crie that it is vnlawful for Christians to carry weapons. For these men were warriours & yet godly: & when they embrace Christ, they forsake not their former kinde of life, they cast not away their armour as hurtfull, ne yet forsake their calling.

8 Where as Cornelius expoundeth the whole matter to the souldiar and his seruants, it tendeth to this end, that he may the more encourage them to giue eare to the commandement, which they see is rather a commaundement of God thā of man: and he is not afraide to make knowen vnto them so great a matter, whom hee had instructed well before.

10 *On the morrow as they iourneied.* As Luke declared that Cornelius was admonished by an oracle to sende for Peter: so now hee setteth downe

downe another vision, whereby Peter is commaunded to come to him. Whereby it appeareth that all this matter was gouerned by the wonderful counsell of God, who doth both make Cornelius apt to be taught, ye he kindleth in him a study & desire to learne, & on the other side, maketh Peter willing to take in hand to teach him. But wee must note the circumstances whereby he maketh the historie more euident.

Peter went vpp vpon the house, that he may pray alone by him selfe. For a quiet and lone place, is a great help to praier, which thing Christ him selfe did not omit, that the minde being free frō all things which might call it away, might be the more earnest and bent toward God. And the Iewes had another maner of houses and buildings, then we vse. For they had walkes vpon the toppes of their houses. The sixt houre was then noone. And it is not to be doubted, but that he gate himself to prayer the according to his custome. For because we are drawn away with diuers busineses, and ther is no end of turmoyling, vnlesse we bridle our selues: it is good to haue certaine houres appointed for prayer, not because we are tyed to houres, but least we be vnmindfull of prayer, which ought to be preferred before all cares and businesse. Finally, we must think the same thing of time, which we think of place: to wit, that they are certain remedies wherby our infirmities is holpen. Which if the Apostles counted fit for them, howe muche more must the sluggish and slow, vse the same?

10 *Excesse of minde.* Because our mindes are wholly as it were set vpon the earth, to the end Peter might the better comprehend the oracle, it was meete that his minde shoulde bee as it were moued from his place and caried vp: and by this meanes was he prepared to receiue the oracle, when as he is carried vp about the world after an vnwonted maner.

11 The opening of heauen signifieth in my iudgement another thing in this place then in the seuenth chapter. For it is saide there, that heauen was opened to Stecuen, that he did behold the glory of Christ: in this place Peter saw our heauen which we see diuided, so that a sheete came thence.

12 If any man aske, howe hee could see a great multitude of liuing creatures at once: the question is easily answered. For Luke saith, *All maner*, because there were there diuers kinds mixed one with another. Therefore he beginneth not at the first kind, that he may prosecute the number vnto the last. Againe, wee must not measure this seeing according to the manner of men: because the traunce gaue Peter other eies. But before wee goe any farther, wee must knowe the ende of the vision. Some dispute more subtiltie about the same, then the place requireth, in my iudgement. Therefore I thinke, that it is generallie shewed to Peter, that the difference which God hadde made in times past, is now taken away. And as he had put difference between liuing creatures: so hauing chosen to himselfe one people, he counted all nations vncleane & profane.

Nowe the difference betweene liuing creatures beeing taken away,

he teacheth by the consequent, that there is no such disagreement among men any longer, as there was in times past, & that there is no difference between the Iew and Grecian. Hereby Peter is admonished, that he do not abhorre the Gentiles as being vncleane. Vndoubtedly God meant to encourage Peter, to come to Cornelius without feare. But he had separated one people to himselfe from the rest, as saith Moses in his song, when as the most highest did distribute the nations, he put his coarde in Iacob, &c. Therefore he called it his inheritance & peculiar people, according to this order, it had not been lawfull for Peter to bring the covenant of saluation vnto the Gentiles: for that was to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to dogges, vnlesse peradventure they would bee circumcised and imbrace the Iewish religion. For it was lawfull to receiue such as did yeeld themselues. Wherefore when as the Apostles were sent before to preach the gospel, they wer forbidden to turn in vnto the Gentiles. And forasmuch as the preaching of the Gospel is a most holie and weightie matter, Peter ought not to haue attempted any thing therein with a doubting and waucring minde. Therefore to the end he may bee assured of his calling, God sheweth manifestly, as in a picture, that the legall difference betwene the cleane and vncleane is abolished: whence he may gather that the wall which was heretofore betwene the Iewes & the Gentiles, is now pulled downe. And Paul saith, that it is a mystery hid from the beginning of the world, that the Gentiles are made partakers of the same saluation with the people of god, and ingrafted into one bodie.

Therefore Peter durst neuer haue opened the gate of heauen vnto the Gentiles, vnlesse God himselfe, had made a plain way and entrance for all men, by taking away the wall of separation, I said euen now, that there was no time wherein it was lawfull to admit the Gentiles vnto the worship of God, so they were circumcised: but so long as they continued in vncircumcision they were straungers with God. But nowe GOD made the covenant of life common to all the whole world, which he had shut vp in one nation, as in a treasure. whence we gather, that this vision is not a little profitable for vs. For when as it teacheth that the difference between the Iewes and Gentiles continued onely for a season: it is as much as if god should pronounce from heauen, that he receiued all people of the worlde into fauour, that he may bee god ouer all. Finally wee haue an euident proclamatiō frō heauen, which putteth vs in hope of eternal life. But some man wil obiekt, that Peter was taught afore concerning this matter. For he & the rest were commaunded to preach the gospel throughout the whole world. Therefore he was either ignorant of his calling, or els this vision was superfluous. I answere, that, there was such & so great difficultie in the noueltie it selfe, that they could not acquaint theselues therewith by & by. They knew both the propheties of the prophets, & the late cōmandement of Christ concerning the calling of the Gentiles by the gospel: but when they com to the pūsh, they doubted neuertheless, being stricken with strangenes of the thing. Wherefore it is no maruel, if the Lord confirme Peter with a new signe, concerning which,

which thing we must also say somewhat as yet in the next chapter.

13 *A voice from heauen.* The voice came from heauen as did the sheet, that Peter might know that both came from God, neither had the sight done him any good, ynlasse God had with this voice made cleane those things which were before vncleane. Whereas some pick an allegorie out of the word *kill*, as if God did signifie that men are sacrificed to him by the spirituall sword of the Gospel, I do not prosecute that: but plainnesse please me better, that God doth take away by this voice, the law concerning the choise of beasts, that he may also teach that he reiecteth no people. For if by the former word be meant *sacrificing*, what shall *eat* signify. Rom. 15. 16

14 *Not so Lord.* This is the voice of him which doth as wel refuse, as also obiect to god his own comendement. For he is afraid for good causes to touch that which he knew was forbidden him in the lawe of God. Therefore he obiecteth to god the law which he himselfe made, least hee should break the same vnaduisedly. There was a certaine shew of repugnancy between the law & the vision. Therefore Peter is not hasty, but desireth first to haue his doubt dissolued, before he depart fro obseruing the law. Yet it is a strange matter, why Peter resisted more in meats, than did Abraham in killing his sonne: for Abraham had more things to obiect. I dare not here say that that befell Peter, which is too comon among me, to stand more about outward & small matters, than about the chief points of the law: I rather make that answer which is out of doubt, that Abraham's minde was so perswaded, & that he was furnished with such power of the Spirit, that he ouercame with lostie & heroicall fortitude al those things which might haue hindered him: but the sprite of god wrought slenderly in Peter. Whereby wee are taught, that euery small or light thing doeth cause vs to doubt, ynlasse the Lord do furnish vs with counsell, and constancie to ouercome all fear. Yet Peter dealeth very godlilie & very religiously, in that being in doubt amidst diuers cogitations, he dare doe nothing, vntill it better appeare what he ought to follow. *Common*, signifieth in this place profane. For because the Lord (as we haue said) had chosen the Iewes to be a peculiar people, he had prescribed vnto the this rite & maner of liuing, that it might distinguish them fro the profane gentiles. Therefore whatsoeuer the gētiles did vse, contrary to the rule of the law, that did they call common: because there was nothing pure or holy, but that which God had appointed for the vse of his people. Leui. 11. 27. &c.

15 *Which God hath made cleane.* He speaketh of meats: but this sentence must be extended vnto all partes of the life. It is worde for worde: *That which God hath made cleane, do not thou make profane*: but the sense is, It is not for vs to allowe or condemne any thing, but as we stand and fall by the iudgement of god alone, so is hee iudge of all thinges. As touching meats, after the abrogating of the Law, god pronounceth that they are all pure & cleane. If on the other side there start vp a mortall man, making a new difference, forbidding certaine, he taketh vnto himselfe the authoritie and power of God by sacrilegious boldnesse. Of this stamp were the olde Heretikes, Montanus, Priscillianus, the Donatistes, the Rom. 14. 4

Tatians, and all the Eucratites. Afterwarde, the Pope, to the ende hee might binde all those sectes in a bundle, made a law concerning meats, and there is no cause why the Patrons of this impietie shoulde babble, that they doe not imagine any vncleannesse in meats, but that men are forbidden to eate flesh vpon certaine dayes, to tame the flesh. For seeing they eate such meates as are most fit both for delicacie and also for riot, why doe they abstaine from eating bacon, as from some great offence, saue onely because they imagine that that is vncleane and polluted which is forbidden by the lawe of their idoll? With like pride doth the tyrannie of the Pope rage in all partes of life: for there is nothing wherein hee layeth not snares to intangle the miserable consciences of men. But let vs trust to the heavenly oracle, and freely despise all his inhibitions. Wee must alwayes aske the mouth of the Lorde, that wee may thereby be assured what we may lawfully doe: forasmuch as it was not lawfull euen for Peter to make that profane, which was lawfull by the worde of God.

Furthermore, this is a place of great importance to beate downe the frowardnesse of men, which they vse too much in peruerse iudgementes. There is no man almost which doeth not graunt libertie to himselfe to iudge of other mens doings. Now as we are churlish and malicious, wee leane more toward the worse part: so that we take from God that which is his. This voice alone ought to suffice to correct such boldnesse, That it is not lawfull for vs to make this or that vncleane: but that this power belongeth to God alone. And also in these wordes is giuen vs to vnderstande, that the Iewes were not therefore the holy people of the Lord, because they excelled through their owne worthinesse, but only by reason of Gods adoption. Nowe after that GOD hadde receiued the Gentiles into the societie of the Couenante, they haue all equall right.

16 *This was done thrise.* The repetition of the vision serued for the confirmation of Peter, least any doubt shoulde remaine in his minde. Whence we gather, how deeply the obseruing of the lawe was rooted in his minde. And I know no reason why God left him in a dumpe, vntil by the euent which followed he might learn the cause of the vision, saue onely because being astonied, he did not desire to know what this thing meant. Although it was all in good time, that the messengers of Cornelius should come shortly after to interpret it. The vessell was at length raken vp againe into heauen, that Peter might bee certified that this message came from heauen.

17 *And as Peter doubted in himselfe, what vision this shoulde bee, which hee had seen: behold, two men sent from Cornelius, enquiring for Simons house, stood at the dore.*

18 *And when they had called, they asked whether Simon, surnamed Peter did lodge there.*

19 *And as Peter thought vpon the vision, the Spirite said to him, behold three men seeke thee,*

- 20 *Arise, goe downe, and goe with them doubting nothing, because I have sent them.*
- 21 *And when Peter was come downe vnto the men which were sent from Cornelius vnto him, he said: Behold, I am he whom yee seeke. What is the cause wherefore yee come hither?*
- 22 *They saide to him: Cornelius the captaine, a iust man, and one that feareth God, hauing testimonie of all the nation of the Iewes, was warned by an oracle by an holy angel, that he should call thee into his house, and should hear of thee wordes.*
- 23 *Furthermore when he had called them in, he lodged them.*

17 Peter was taught not only by the vision, but also by the word of God: & yet in seeing, he saw not, vntil the Spirit is vnto him an interpreter: a most excellent mirror of our slacknes. Although we be yet far vnlike to Peter: for we are so farre from vnderstanding by & by what God will, or to what end he speaketh to vs, that many interpretations are scarce sufficient for vs. But we must also note that which Luke addeth: that Peter did think earnestly vpon the vision: to wit, after that hee was come to himselfe againe after his amazednesse: for this was a token of godly reuerence, that he did not carelesly suffer the vision to escape him. Therefore the Lord opened to him when he did knock. And wee are iustly plagued for our sluggishnesse, in that we profit no better in the word of the Lord, seeing we are so colde, and haue so small desire to enquire.

20 *Goe, doubting nothing.* The scripture vseth this word often, when it will expresse of what sort the obedience of faith ought to be. So Paule in the fourth chapr. to the Romanes, when as he commendeth the faith of Abraham, saith: That he doubted not when as the Lord promised him seed, being now aged, and past hope of children. And in the fourteenth intreating of meats, he condemneth doubting consciences. And it is properly to reason on both sides (as they say): when as we are caried hither & thither by course: by gathering contrary reasons. But we must not follow God with a doubtfull & wauering, but with a quiet & constant mind. In summe, the Lord will haue vs to attribute so much to him, that when we heare him, we dispute no longer what we haue need to doe: but that we set downe for a certaintie, that that must be done which he commaundeth. And surely it is meet that his will should shew vs the way, when all cloudes are driuen away, and that it shoulde subdue all our senses vnto it, vnto willing obedience, all reasoning being broken of. Which is also better gathered by the next text. For the reason is added, why it is not lawfull for Peter to suspend his iudgement in an vncertaine matter: because God is the authour of the businesse, because it is as much as if it should be saide, that we ought to bee content with the becke of God alone, that we may obey his commaundement. And heereby are wee also admonished that mens consciences shall by no other meanes be quiet, that they safely do that which they do, then when beeing taught by the worde of God, they determine that they doe nothing without his commaundement and conduct.

Mat. 7. 7.

Rom. 4. 19.
Rom. 14. 23

21 Behold I am he whom yee seeke. Luke declareth now howe readie Peter was to obey, secondly that he vnderstood at length by the messengers, to what end the vision was shewed vnto him. For hee heareth that he is called by Cornelius, a man that is a Gentile, whom he would haue counted profane, and vnworthie of his companie, vnlesse his iugement had been correct with this voice, That which God calleth pure, iudge not thou to be common. This is to be wise in deed, when as abandoning all vain confidence, and correcting our stubbornesse, the authoritie of God doth so pul vs vnto it, & doth so possesse our mindes, that we count nothing right, but that which it prescribeth.

22 Cornelius a iust man. Cornelius his seruants commendeth their master not ambitiously, or to the end they may flatter him: but that Peter may the lesse abhor his company. And for this cause they say that he was approued of the Iewes, that Peter may know that he was not estranged from true and sincere godlinesse. For euen these which were superstitious, though they serued Idols, did boast that they were worshippers of God. But Cornelius coulde not haue the Iewes who retained the worship of the true God alone, to be witnesses of his godlines, vnlesse he had professed that he worshipped the God of Abraham with them. Furthermore, as this was a rare example, so it ought to haue moued Peter not a little. Although they leane most of all to this argument, that they may perswade him that which they goe about, that all this matter is gouerned by the commandement of God: as if they should say, That hee is not so much called by a mortal man, as by God, who had so commanded by his angell.

23 And Peter also being overcome with the authoritie of God, deliberateth no longer, but lodgeth the men, that hee may go with them forthwith. So we must meekly submit our selues to God: and there remaineth nothing after that we know his will, but that we runne speedily thither whither he calleth vs. There is no difficultie in the rest.

The day following Peter went forth with them, and certaine of the brethren that were of Ioppe accompanied him.

24 And the next day they entred into Cesarea. And Cornelius wayted for them, hauing called his kinsfolke, and friends together.

25 And when Peter entred in, Cornelius meeting him, and falling downe at his feete, worshipped him.

26 But Peter lifted him vp, saying: Arise, I am also a man.

27 And when he had talked with him, he entred in: & he found many assembled together.

28 And he said to them: You know that it is wickednesse for a man that is a Iew to ioyn himself to a man that is a stranger: or to enter in vnto him: but god hath shewed to me, that no man must be called common or vncleane.

29 For this cause I came without gainesaying, when I was called. Therefore I demaund, for what cause ye haue called mee.

The day following he went forth. It should seem that they arriued a litle before

before night: because they were not as yet entred the citie at noone: and the vision which was shewed thise asked no small time. Therefore when they had taken their rest all night, they addresse themselves to return. Againe, this was a point of curtesie in that some of the faithfull doe accompany Peter, who were sent as it is to be thought, by the whole church, to bring him euen to Cesarea. These men iourney with Peter for good will and honours sake: but the Lorde bringeth them, that they may bee witnesses of his grace. So that they are bountifully rewarded for their thankfulness, when as for confirmation of their faith, they see the kingdom of Christ spread abroad euen vnto the Gentiles.

24 *Cornelius waited for them.* Luke doth not only commend the godly affection of Cornelius in this point, that he wayted earnestly for Peters coming, but because he would haue his friendes & kinsfolkes to be companiōs with him in the faith. This was a thing not without great danger, to call together a companie of men, that they might imbrace a new kinde of religion. And there wanted not reasons, vnder colour whereof he might haue flattered himself. For he was not commaunded to call others to accompanie him, but rather they were passed ouer, and he himself was chosen to be made partaker of so great goodness: but hee considered with himselfe, howe much hee was indebted both to the glory of God, & also to the saluatiō of his brethren: he knew that it was an vniust thing, & a point of discourtesie to prouide for himselfe alone, & not to regarde others: he counted it a point of filthie carelesnesse, to hide the treasure of the Gospel vnder the ground. Therefore he did that which the Lord requireth of all his by Isaias and Micheas, that euery one exhorthe his brother (taking him as it were by the hand) vnto the faith. Therefore Cornelius hath taught vs by his example, that when God reuealeth himself vnto vs, we must not choke the light of this knowledge with sloth or fear: but we must rather indeuour that our faith may shine before others to giue light, & to shew the way to them. For the inheritāce of the kingdom of heauen is not such, that euen the least portion can be taken frō vs, if many bee made partakers thereof, but if others bee made coheires with vs, it shall rather increase our glory. Furthermore, wee must marke how far he is from vain glory. For he calleth them that he may haue the to be his schoole felowes, being himselfe readie to learne. This is the true studie of godlinesse, when as togeather with zeale there appeareth such plainnesse, that we are not ashamed to depend vpon the mouth of God. For many are pricked forward with ambition, to imploy themselves in teaching the ignorant, & foolish babling discouereth their folly, when as they huddle out words more earnestly, & they wold haue none heard but themselves. But this alone ought to be the drift of all men, to bring themselves & al the whole world vnder god, that when men are subdued vnto true humilitie, he alone may haue the preheminēce. Let not him which excelleth in the faculty & grace of teaching, refuse to teach his brethrē, so that he be free from boasting and proude desire to excell: let him to whō it was not granted to be a teacher, keep himselfe within his boundes: let neither of them desire mastership: as Iames teacheth this: but let one

so edifie another, that neither the learned, neither the vnlearned bee ashamed to be brought into order. Notwithstanding it is demanded, what kinsfolkes he could haue in Iudea, seeing that he was an aliaunt, & was come thither only by reason of warre, which continued but for a shorte time? As I affirme nothing, so I embrace this as most probable, That hee had some in his garrison which were his kinsmen. For neighbors & those which were of acquaintance, were wont to serue vnder one captain. And we need not doubt of this but that Cornelius his kinsmen were desirous to be vnder him, forasmuch as he was a centurion. Hee calleth familiar friends *Anagcious*, as those are called of the Latines, *Necessarii*, whiche are neerer together.

25 *Falling downe at his feete, he worshipped.* Here is the worde *prostratus*, which signifieth to testifie honour or worship, either by bowing the knee, or ducking downe the head, or by any other gesture. Nowe the question is whether Peter refuseth this worship for modesties sake only, or he disalloweth it as a thing altogether vnlawfull? It appeareth that Cornelius his fact displeased Peter, by the reason which is by and by added: *Arise*, for euen I am a man. For we may gather that there was some diuine thing in that worship, because hee did ascribe vnto mortall man the honour which is due to God alone. But we must not think that Cornelius did count Peter in steed of God. For if he translated Gods honor vnto mortall man, where is that godlinesse and religion, with the title whereof he was of late adourned? Therefore I thinke that he meant nothing lesse then to spoyle God of his lawfull worship, that he might giue it to man, but forasmuch as he meant to giue singular honour vnto the prophet and Apostle of Christ, hee fell into an immoderate token of reuerence, and so he offended in excessse. For it can scarce bee expressed in wordes, how prone men are to fall to superstition, when as that honour is giuen to the ministers of Christ, which hath any small shew of diuine worshippe. For we fall easily vnwares into that, whereof we thought full little. There were lesse daunger in a king or in the chiefe chieftanes of this worlde. For he which falleth downe before a king, keepeth himselfe within the boundes of earthly and ciuill honour: but the case standeth otherwise in the ministers of Christ. For as their office is spirituall, so if any man fall downe at their feete, to worship them, this honour hath in it some spirituall thing. For wee must put a difference betweene ciuill worship which men vse among themselues in respect of ciuill order, and that vnder which is contained religion, or which respecteth directlye the honour of God: as also betweene lawes which are made for temporall regiment, or which binde the conscience. For certaine foolish men are deceiued too farre, who think that kneeling is in this place condemned simplic and of it selfe. But this is that which I said: Cornelius doth not heere salute his Proconsull or the Emperour after any ciuill sorte: but being stricken with wondering when hee sawe Peter, hee honoureth him, as he woulde haue honoured God, if he had been present. So that he giueth man more then is meet, hauing as it were forgotten himselfe. He thought nothing lesse (as I haue already said) then to robbe GOD

of any part of his honour, that hee might giue that to man which hee rooke from him : but when as the worshippe which is giuen to man hath somewhat which is as it were linked with the honour of God, men fall into a fault contrary to their hope and opinion, so that they extoll man about his degree and giue him the worship which is due to God. The Papists omitting that distinction, snatch onely at one member, for they handle religious worship onely: to the ende they may ascribe some part thereof with some honest colour vnto creatures, they cut it into *latriam*, *duliam*, & *hyperduliam*. They giue *latriam* to God alone : as if they should say that the adoration of worship is due to him alone, they make *duliam* common to the dead and their bones, to images and pictures. They asigne their *hyperduliam* to the virgine Marie, and to the crosse whereon Christ hanged. That I may omit to say that they bable through childish ignorance, how many of them doe vnderstande that rotten distinction ? neither doe I speake onely of the common sort, but of the chieftaines. Therefore all their worshipings must needs be infected & corrupt with wicked superstition, seing they vnaduisedly match creatures with God. But Luke saith not in this place, that Cornelius gaue to Peter *latriam* or the honour due to God: he vseth onely the general word *worshipped*, and he addeth notwithstanding, that he was reprov'd, because hee did wickedly extoll man higher than became him. Surely if that new opinion concerning the adoration which is called *dulica* had any place, Peter ought to haue admonished Cornelius, that he should not go beyond *duliam*. But because no worship whereunto religion is annexed and the respect of Gods honour, doth leaue to God his honour vntouched, what name soeuer it haue: therefore Peter is content with this one onely reason, that he is a man. Moreouer I would gladly know of the Papists, whether they thinke that Iohn was so blockish, that hee woulde take the honour due to God which they call *latriam*, and giue it to the Angell ? Surely there was nothing else that caused him to worshippe the Angel saue onely too much and preposterous reuerence, and that in honor of God whose glory shined in the Angel: notwithstanding his fact is condemned. Therefore to the end we may giue God that which is his owne, let the spiritual worship vnder which is comprehended religion, remain whole and sound to him.

28 *Ye know, that it is not lawfull.* This seemeth to be no friendly preface, and such as may rather harden then winne their heartes, when as they heare that they are accounted so vncleane, that with their familiarity & conference they pollute the saints: which must needs be a great reproch for them. But it was needfull for Peter thus to speake, least they should suspect that he had an euill conscience, because contrarie to the custome deliuered by the fathers, he came. But when as hee affirmeth that hee was sent of God, all such suspicion is taken away and purged. Moreouer hee mitigateth very well by these wordes, the offence which did sticke in their minds, by reason of an old grudge which was between the Iewes and the Gentiles, so that he could by no meanes haue entred his speech better. For he pronounceth that those are now cleane who

Deut. 7.3.

were before vncleane, so that they haue mutuall fellowship nowe with the saints. Furthermore where as he said that it was wickednesse for the Iewes to go in vnto the Gentiles, wee must knowe that this came not so much from the lawe, as from the obseruation of the fathers. God had forbidden in deed that they should not intangle themselues with marriages or couenants: they were neuer forbidden to eate with them, or to vie the common businesses of life. But least that familiaritie might intise them vnto that which was forbidden, they obserued the custome deliuered by the fathers, so that they did not company together. It is to no end to dispute here, whether that tradition did binde mens consciences: for Peter doth not teach what is lawfull according to God, but what was commonly vsed.

No man. He maketh the summe and ende of the vision more plaine, when hee referreth that vnto men which was spoken of meates. And whereas he saith that no man is vncleane, it may not be vnderstood of all particular persons, for it is certaine that al vnbeleeuers are polluted with vncleannesse of conscience, so that they pollute those things which are otherwise pure, when as they do but touch them. Paul also saith that their children remaine vncleane, vntil they be cleansed by faith. Finally if faith alone doe purge and purifie the hearts of men, vnbeliefe doeth make the same prophane. But Peter compareth the Iewes and the Gentiles together in this place: and because the wall of separation was pulled downe, and the couenant of life is nowe common to them both alike, he saith that those are not to be counted aliants, who are made partakers of Gods adoption.

29 We must also note that which hee addeth that he came without gaine saying. For this is the holy silence of faith, when as without murmuring against God, we receiue that meekely, which he commandeth abandoning all contrary reasons, which intrude themselues.

30 *Then saith Cornelius, Foure dayes agoe vntill this houre, I was fasting, and about the ninth houre I praied at my house: and behold a man stood before me in a shining garment.*

31 *Who said: Cornelius, thy praier is heard, and thy almes is come into remembrance before God.*

32 *Therefore send men to Ioppa, and fetch Simon: whose surname is Peter, this man lodgeth in the house of Simon the tanner: when he shall be present, he shall speake to thee.*

33 *Therefore after that houre I sent vnto thee, and thou hast done well that thou art come. Therefore all we are now present before God, to heare all things which are appointed for thee of God.*

Because this answer of Cornelius containeth onely the bare repetition of the historie, I shall not need to stand long about that. The sum is, that he called Peter at the commandement of God.

30 *I was fasting.* Many greeke bookes haue *emen*, I fate. The olde interpreter omitteth the word Fasting: which I thinke was done through
errour

error or negligence, because it is expressed in all the Greeke bookes. Furthermore hee maketh expresse mention of fasting, partly that wee may know that he praied not coldly, or ouerfields at that time: secondly, that the vision may be the lesse suspected. For doubtlesse the braine of a man that is fasting (where there is moderate sobrietic) doeth not easily admit anie strong imaginations wherein appeare images and strange formes, whereby men are disceiued. Therefore Cornelius his meaning is that he was earnestly bent to pray, at such time as the Angel appeared to him, and that his minde was free from all such lets which vse to make men subiect to fantasies, & imaginations. And to the same end tendeth the circumstance of time, that this was done when it was now faire day light, three houres before the going downe of the sunne.

A man: stood in shining garment. Hee calleth him a man, who he knew was an Angel of God, but it is a common thing for the name of the visible forme wherein God or his Angels appeare, to bee translated vnto him or them. So Moses doth sometimes cal them Angels, & sometimes men, which appeared to Abraham in shape of men. The shining garment was a token of heauenly glory, and as it were a signe of the diuine maiesty which appeared in the Angel. The Euangelistes declare that there was such brightnes in Christs garment, when he shewed his glory to the three disciples in the mount. The same thing do they witnesse of the Angels which were sent to testifie Christs resurrection. For as the Lord beareth with our infirmitie, thus farre that hee commaundeth his Angels to descend vnder forme of our flesh, so he casteth out vpon them certaine beames of his glory, that the commandements which he hath committed to them, may be the more reuerenced and beleueed. Heere ariseth a question, whether that were a true and naturall bodie, & whether that were a garment in deed, or Cornelius did only see such a shape and shew. And though this be not so necessarie to bee knowne, and wee can scarce affirme any thing for a truth: yet it seemeth to me more probable as touching coniecture, that God to whom it belongeth to create all things, gaue to the Angel a true body, and did cloath the same with a most gorgeous garment. But so soone as the Angel had ended his imbasage, I thinke he was restored to his owne nature, the body and garment being brought to nought: and that hee suffered no humane thing, so long as he was in the shape of man.

33 *Therefore we are all now present.* To the end Peter may be more ready and willing to teach, Cornelius affirmeth that himselfe and the rest will be apt to bee taught, and ready to obey God: for this serueth not a litle to moue the teacher to take paines with the hearers: when as hee hopeth assuredly that they shall profite thereby. These words *before God* may haue a double meaning, they may either be an oath, or Cornelius may thereby simply professe, that that company was gathered together at his house, as in the sight of God, that they may heare mans voyce in like sort, as if it proceeded out of Gods owne mouth. Whether soeuer you choose, there shalbe alwaies one end. For to the end Cornelius may the more procure the credite of his sincerity, he testifieth that

that he hath God before his eyes, whom no man may mock by dissimulation. And assuredly so oft as the word of God is set before vs, we must thus thinke with our selues, that wee haue not to deale with a mortall man, but that God is present and doth call vs. For from this respect of God ariseth the maiestie of Gods worde, and reuerence in hearing the same. Notwithstanding he seemeth to promise vnadvisedly for others in a matter so weightie, for who can be a fit borrow for another mans faith? But because euery man had promised obedience for himselfe, hee doth for good causes hope that they were so affectioned: and vndoubtedly we may thinke that they had promised that they would bee obedient to his sayings so soone as the matter was shewed them, and that euen then euery one confirmed by himself that which one had spoken in the name of all.

To heare all things. This only is true faith when wee embrace not the one halfe of the worde of God alone, but addict our selues wholly vnto it: and yet notwithstanding there bee few examples in the world of this full and vniuersall faith. For the more part doth not submit themselves to the doctrine of God, as if they had made a covenant with God, saue onely so farre forth as it pleaseth them: if any thing displease them they either carelessly contemne or mislike the same. But Cornelius doth wisely distinguish betweene God and man: for he maketh God the authour of the doctrine, and leaueth nothing for man besides the ministry and embassage. Thou shalt saith he, haue attentiuē scholars, and those which will be obedient in all things, which God hath commaunded thee: that he alone may be principall, and thou onely his minister: that hee alone may speake, but out of thy mouth. Which thing God prescribeth to all his seruants in the person of Ezechiel. Take saith he, the word out of my

Ezec. 33. 7. mouth, and thou shalt shew vnto them from me.

34 And Peter opening his mouth said: Of a trush I finde that God is no acceptor of persons:

35 But in euery nation he that feareth him, and doth righteousness, is accepted of him.

36 Concerning the thing which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Iesus Christ (he is Lord of all.)

37 Yee know how the word was spread throughout all Iudea, beginning at Galilee after the Baptisme which Iohn preached:

38 How that God hath annointed Iesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost, and with power, who went doing good, and healing all those which were holden by the Diuill: because God was with him.

34 *Opening his mouth.* We haue already saide that the Scripture vseth this phrase, when it doth signifie that there was any graue or weightie oration or speech made. In the first of Mathew it is said that Iesus opened his mouth, when he would preach to his disciples, and intreate of most weighty matters: as if a man should say in Latine, He began to speak, hauing first well bethought himselfe what he would speake.

Math. 5. 1.

In truth I finde. *Catalanuanesihai* is to apprehend, or to gather by reasons, signes and coniectures. Cornelius was a Gentile borne: yet God heareth his prayers, hee vouchsafeth to shew him the light of the Gospel, hee appointed and sendeth an Angel to him particularly: thereby doth Peter know, that without respect of persons those doe please God, which liue godlily and innocently. For before (being wholly possesst with this prejudice, that the Iewes alone were beloued of God, as they alone were chosen out of all people) he did not thinke that the grace of god could come vnto others. He was not so grosse, that he thought that godlines & innocencie of life were condemned, because they were in a man that was a Gentile: but seing he did simplicie snatch at that, that all those were estraunged from the kingdome of God and were prophane which were vncircumcised, hee intangled himselfe vnawares in that so filthy an error, that God did despise his pure worship and an holy life, where there was no circumcision, because vncircumcision made al vertues vnfaueury to the Iewes. By which example we are taught, how greatly we ought to beware of prejudices, which make vs oftentimes iudge amisse. Furthermore we must note what the word *person* doeth signifie: because many are thereby deceiued, whiles that they expounde it generally, that one man is not preferred before another. So Pelagius denied in times past that some are chosen and some are proued of God: because God did not accept persons. But by this word wee must vnderstand the externall state or appearance as they call it: and whatsoeuer is about man himselfe, which doeth either bring him in fauour, or cause him to be hated: riches, nobilitie, multitude of seruants, honour doe make a man to be in great fauour: pouertie, basenes of linage, & such like things make him to be despised. In this respect, the Lord doth oftentimes forbid the accepting of persons: because men cannot iudge aright, so often as external respects do lead them away from the matter. In this place it is referred vnto the nation: and the meaning is: that vncircumcision is no let, but that God may allow righteousness in a man that is a Gentile. But it shall seeme by this meanes that God did respect persons for a time. For when as he did chooseth the Iewes to be his people, passing over the Gentiles, did hee not respect persons? I aunswere that the cause of this difference, ought not to be sought in the persons of men: but it doth wholly depende vpon the hidden counsel of God. For in that he rather adopted Abraham, that with him hee might make his couenant, then the Egyptians, he did not this being moued with any external respect, but all the whole cause remained in his wonderfull counsell. Therefore God was neuer tyed to persons. Notwithstanding the doubt is not as yet dissolued: because it cannot be denied, but that circumcision did please God, so that he counted him one of his people, who had that token of sanctification. But we may easily answere this also, That circumcision followed after the grace of god, forasmuch as it was a seale thereof. Whereuppon it followeth that it was no cause thereof. Neuerthelesse it was vnto the Iewes a pledge of free adoption in such sort, that vncircumcision did not hinder God, but that hee might admitte what

Gentiles he would, vnto the society of the same saluation. But the coming of Christ had this new and especiall thing, that after that the wall of separation was pulled downe, God did embrace the whole world generally. And this doe the words *in euery nation* import. For so long as Abrahams seede was the holy inheritance of God, the Gentiles might seeme to be quite banished from his kingdome. But when Christ was giuen to be a light of the Gentiles, the couenant of eternall life, began to be common to all alike.

35 *He which feareth God and doth righteousness.* In these two members is comprehended the integritie of all the whole life. For the feare of God is nothing else but godlinesse and religion: and *righteousnes*, is that equitie which men vse among themselues, taking heede least they hurt any man, and studying to do good to all men. As the law of God consisteth vpon these two parts (which is the rule of good life): so no man shal proue himselfe to God, but he which shal refer & direct all his actions to this end, neither shal ther be any sound thing in al offices, ynlesse the whole life be grounded in the feare of God. But it seemeth that this place doth attribute the cause of saluation vnto the merits of works. For if works purchase fauor for vs with god, they do also win life for vs, which is placed in the loue of God towards vs. Some do also catch at the word *righteousnes*, that they may proue that we are not iustified freely by faith, but by workes. But this latter thing is too friuolous. For I haue already shewed, that it is not taken for the perfit and whole obseruing of the law, but is restrained vnto the second table, and the offices of loue: therefore it is not the vniuersall righteousness, whereby a man is iudged iust before God: but that honesty & innocency which respecteth men, when as that is giuen to euery man which is his. Therefore the question remaineth as yet, whether workes win the fauor of God for vs? Which that we may answer, we must first note, that there is a double respect of God in louing men. For seing we be borne the children of wrath, god shalbe so far from finding any thing in vs, which is worthy of his loue, that al our whole nature causeth him rather to hate vs, in which respect Paul saith that al me are enemies to him, vntil they be reconciled by Christ. Therefore the first accepting of God, wherby he receiueth vs into fauour, is altogether free: for there can as yet no respect of workes be had, seing all things are corrupt and wicked, and taste of their beginning. Now whom God hath adopted to be his children, them doth he also regenerate by his Spirit, & reforme in them his image: whence riseth that second respect. For God doth not finde man bare and naked then, and voide of all grace: but he knoweth his own work in him, yea himself. Therefore God accepteth the faithful, because they liue godly and iustly. And we doe not denie, that God accepteth the good workes of the saints: but this is another question, Whether man preuent the grace of God with his merits or no, and insinuate himselfe into his loue: or whether he be beloued at the beginning freely and without respect of workes, forasmuch as he is worthy of nothing else but of hatred. Furthermore forasmuch as man left to his owne nature, can bring nothing but matter of hatred, he must needs confess that hee is freely beloued: whereupon it followeth that God is to

Ephes. 2. 14.

Ephes. 2. 3.
Rom. 5. 6. 8.

himself the cause that he loueth vs: and that he is prouoked with his own mercy, and not with our merits. Secondly, we must note, that although the faithful please God after regeneration with goods works, & their respect of works, yet that is not done with the merit of works. For the cleannes of works is neuer so exact, that they can please God without pardon; yea forasmuch as they haue alwaies some corruption mixed with them, they are worthy to be refused. Therefore the worthines of the works, doth not cause them to be had in estimation but faith, which borroweth that of Christ which is wanting in works.

36 *Cōcerning the matter.* Because the greek text is abrupt, some think that the Accusatiue case is put in steede of the Nominatiue: & that the sense is this, This is the word which God hath sent vnto the children of Israel. Other some refer it vnto the word *ye know*, which followeth afterward: & they think that there was another word added, to make the sentence more pleasant. For Luke putteth *logon* in the former place: and afterward *rema*. But forasmuch as it is comō & familiar amongst the grecians, to vnderstand the prepositions: this sense which I haue set down seemeth to me more agreable, though, if the harshnes of the speech can be any better mitigated, I wil willingly yeeld. Therefore I take this member to be a preface, which appertaineth vnto this worthy worke of God, which he shewed amongst the children of Israel, preaching peace by Christ: that done there is added a narration: at length in the cōclusion of his speech, Peter sheweth to what end Christ was sent into the world. Furthermore he beginneth with this commemoration nor without cause, That God sent his word vnto the children of Israel. And Speech is put for Thing in the Hebrew phrase. The eternall couenant which God had made with that people, was at that time famous. There was nothing more comonly knowne amongst the Iewes, than that there was a redeemer promised in times past to the fathers, who should restore things which were decayed, vnto a flourishing and blessed estate. This did those also know, who were familiarly conuersant with the Iewes. Therefore to the ende Peter may purchase greater credit, he saith that he wil speak of no new or vnknown thing, but of the restoring of the Church which did depend vpon the eternall couenant of God, and which was nowe manifestly shewed: and almost in euery mans mouth.

Preaching peace. Peter teacheth here what maner rumour & thing that was which was spread abroad: to wit, such as that it did make peace. I take *peace* in this place for the recōciling of men & God, which nor with standing hath in it the perfite saluation of the church. For as horrible cōfusion, & as it were a huge lump, do follow after that god is once estranged from vs: so, so soone as his fatherly fauour doth once appeare, he gathereth his church together, & true felicity ariseth. Therefore this is Peter his meaning, that god shewed himself merciful to his people in Christ, & that he receiued into fauor Abraham his children again, (whom he seemed to haue cast away for a time) that he might establish among them a flourishing estate. And as he maketh God the author of this peace, so he placeth Christ in the mids, as the pledge therof, that it may be certain & holy. He coupleth peace and preaching expresly together, because this

Ephes. 2. 17. is one way whereby the fruite of the reconciliation purchased by Christ commeth vnto vs. In like sort after that Paul hath taught that Christ is our peace, he addeth immediatly, that hee came to preach peace vnto those who were nigh at hand and farre off.

37 *Ye know howe the word.* This sermon of Peter consisteth vppon two members principally: for in the former he reciteth an historie: secondly he descendeth vnto the fruit of the historie. For seing that the comming of Christ into the world, his death and resurrection, are the matter of our saluation, Christ cannot otherwise be set before vs to saluation, than if we first know that hee hath put on our flesh, that hee was in such sort conuersant amongst men, that he proued himselfe by certaine testimonies to be the son of God: that he was at length nailed vpon the crosse, and raised vp from the dead by the power of God. Againe least the knowledge of the historie be vnprofitable and colde, we must also shewe the end, why he came downe from his heauenly glorie into the worlde, why he suffered such a death so reprochfull amongst men, and accursed by the mouth of God. The cause of his resurrection must bee shewed, whence the effect and fruite of all these things is gathered: to wit, that Christ was humbled, that he might restore vs vnto perfite blessednesse, who were quite lost: and also that hee put on brotherly loue together with our flesh: that by taking vpon him our infirmities, hee vnburdened vs thereof: that hee made satisfaction for our sinnes by the sacrifice of his death that he might purchase the fathers fauor for vs: that when as he had gotten the victorie of death, he purchased for vs eternall life: that hee set heauen open for vs by his entrance into the same: that all the power of the Spirit was powred out vpon him, that he might enrich vs with his abundance. This order of teaching doth Peter obserue, when hee beginneth with the history of the gospel: and afterward sheweth, what we haue by Christ his descending into the earth, by his death and resurrection. First he saith, that Iesus of Nazareth came abroade after Iohn his Baptisme. For because Iohn was appointed to this end, by the counsell of God, that he might lift vp the mindes of the people to waite for Christ, it was not meete that this point should be omitted. Hee was counted an excellent Prophet of God: therefore his authoritie was of great importance to make Christ to be beleueed, especially amongst the ignorant and those which were but nouices. We must note the phrase, that Iohn preached Baptisme. For Luke comprehendeth in deed, vnder the worde *Baptisme*, all the whole ministry of Iohn: neuertheless hee sheweth that it was no dumb signe, and voide of doctrine. And assuredly this is the chiefeest thing in all sacraments, that the worde of God may appeare ingrauen ther, and that the cleare voice may sound. For which cause that wicked profanation which is scene in papistrie is so much the more to be detested, because burying, preaching, they do onely chaunge the sacraments with magical inchantment.

38 *Iesus of Nazareth.* He calleth him a Nazarite here, not because he was borne there, but because hee came thence to execute his office. Againe because he was surnamed thus commonly. He saith that hee was
annointed

annointed with the Spirite and power by hypallage. For the power wherein Christ exceeded proceeded from the Spirite alone. Therefore when as the heauenly father annointed his son, hee furnished him with the power of his Spirit. Peter saith immediatly after, that this power appeared in myracles: although hee expresseth one kinde onely in plaine words, that Christ testified, that he was endewed with power of the holy Ghost, that he might do good in the world. For it was not meete that the fearefull power of God should bee shewed forth in him: but such as might allure the worlde with the sweete tast of goodnesse and grace to loue him and to desire him. The metaphore of Anointing is vsuall so often as mention is made of the gifts of the holy ghost: it is now applied vnto the person of Christ: because by this meanes he was consecrated a king and Priest by his father. And we know that in time of the Law oile was a solemne token of consecration. The Going of Christ is taken for the course of his calling: as if he should say that he fulfilled his function vntill the time appointed before. The similitude is taken from trauellers which go forward in their iorney, vntill they come vnto the appointed place. Although he sheweth therewithall that he walked through Iudea in three yeeres, so that no corner was without his good deeds.

Those which were holden of Diuils. This also was a more manifest token of Gods power in Christ, that hee did not onely heale men of common diseases, but did also cure desperate euils. All diseases are in deede light punishments, wherewith God doth punish vs: but when as hee dealeth more gently with vs according to his fatherly kindnesse, hee is saide to strike vs with his hand then: but in more greuous scourges hee vseth Satan as the minister of his wrath, and as it were an hangman. And wee must diligently marke this distinction: for it were an absurd thing to say that he is tormented of the diuell who is sicke of an Ague or of some other common kinde of disease: but the alienating of the minde, furious madnesse, and other as it were monstrous griefes, are fitly and properly attributed to Satan. And in this respect the scripture vseth to cal men who are so taken and carried headlong with such madnesse that they haue no hold of themselves, so that they seeme to be turned almost into beastes, men possessed of diuels.

Because God was with him. Peter noteth briefly to what end those powers did tende which were shewed by the hande of Christ: to wit, that he might purchase credite among men, who did behold God as it were present: and this was the true vse of myracles, as wee haue saide alreadie else where, and as we shal see againe hereafter when we come to it. For we must stay our selues vpon this principle, that we diminish the maiestie of God, vnlesse we imbrace and reuerence those whom he marketh with the marke of his seruantes. Therefore forasmuch as powers did plainly proue that Christ descended from heauen, his dignitie is placed without the lot of mans iudgement.

39 *And we are witnesses of all things which he did in the countrie of the Iewes, and at Ierusalem: whom they slew hanging him on a tree.*

- 40 Him God raised the third day, and shewed him openlie,
 41 Not vnto all the people, but to the witnesses appointed before of God for this purpose: namely to vs who did eat and drinke with him, after that he was risen from the dead:
 42 And he commaunded vs that wee should preach to the people, and should testifye that he is appointed iudge of the quicke and dead.
 43 To this man do all the Prophets beare witnessse, that whosoeuer beleeueth in him, may through his name receiue remission of sinnes.

39 And we be witnesses. That he may make his words to be beleued, he saith that hee and his fellowes in office sawe with their eyes all those things which they spake concerning Christ. Shortly after he taketh the word *witnessse* in another sense: when he saith, that they were appointed witnesses by God, and that they are brought forth as it were by God, that they might by their preaching bring men vnto the faith of Christ. So Paule in the fifteenth of the first to the Corinthians saith: we, saith hee shoulde bee founde false witnesses, vnlesse Christ were risen from the dead. And wee haue already heard by the mouth of Christ, yee shall be my witnesses in Iudea, Samaria and at Ierusalem. And now Peter calleth himselfe onely an historicall witnesse, because he beheld the things which were done. And here he toucheth his death briefly, because it was openly knowne: he standeth longer vpon his resurrection, which was more doubtful, and the knowledge whereof was more auailable vnto faith.

41 If any man demaunde heere, Why God did not shewe his sonne openly to al men after his resurrection: I answere; Although there could no reason bee shewed, yet ought the counsell of God alone to suffice sober and modest men, that they may assure themselues without al doubt that that is best which God hath thought meet. And yet assuredly God vsed this moderation to a good ende. For the certaintie of the resurrection was proued by many and firme testimonies, and this was profitable to exercise the faith of the godly, to beleue the Gospel rather than their eies. As touching the wicked and professed enimies of Christ, seeing that being so often conuict they woulde neuer yeelde to God, they were vnworthy to haue Christ to admit them to behold the glorie of his resurrection. Though euen they were sufficiently conuict with the report of the soldiars, whom they had hyred to keepe the sepulchre: that I may omitte other reasons which wee may fet out of the Harmonie. Therefore let vs assure our selues of this, that the holy Apostles were chosen by the holy decree of God, that by their testimonie the truth of Christ his resurrection might stande. Whosoeuer is not content with this approbation, let him take away and ouerthrow if he can, that inuincible decree of God, which Peter commendeth to vs in this place. And as for vs if we couet to haue God the sure authour of our faith, let vs learne to bee content with the witnesses, whom in due time hee hath brought forth as it were by his hande, being ordained by him before the world was made.

Who did eate. And here it appeareth what great regard Christ had of our rudenesse and ignorance, who did abase himselfe so farre for our sake, that when he was now endewed with heauenly glorie, hee did yet notwithstanding eate and drinke as a mortall man. Wherefore there is no cause why wee shoulde complaine that the resurrection of Christ is obscure and doubtfull. For he suffered his disciples to be slow and hard of beliefe for this cause, that being better confirmed, they might take from vs all occasion of doubting. Yea rather wee must indeuour our selues that our vnworthinesse and vnthankfulnesse doe not darken so great kindnesse of the sonne of God toward vs. But when as the scripture saith that Christ did eate, curious men moue a question, what became of that meate? But the answer is easie: that like as it was created of nothing, so was it easily brought to nothing by the diuine power of Christ. That meate which is taken for the sustenance of the bodie, is concoct and afterward digested: but wee knowe that Christ tooke this meate to feede our faith, and in this vse was it spent. And those men are deceiued who thinke that Christ did onely seeme to eate. For what good coulde such a visure or vaine shewe haue done. For when as wee say that Christ was not enforced with any necessitie of his owne to eate, but that hee meant onlie to prouide for those that were his, all occasion is cutte off from the friuolous inuentions of men.

42 *And he commaunded vs.* Hee beginneth in this place to intreat of the kingdome of Christ, when he saith, that Christ did rise againe for this cause that hee may once iudge the worlde. For by the same right are the gouernement of heauen and earth, and the perpetuall gouernment of the Church due to him: he saith that he shall be iudge of *quicke and deade*, because when as the deade shall rise againe, others also who shall then remaine aliue, shall be chaunged in a moment as Paule teacheth in the fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and in the first to the Thessalonians and the sowerth Chapter: In the word *Testifie* there is great weight: because as men are naturally inclined vnto vnbeliefe, the simple preaching of the Gospel should not be so effectual, vnlesse the Lorde should establish it with strong protestations. And chiefly euery one of vs doeth feeble in himselfe too much, what a hard matter it is, both to lift vp our mindes to hope for the comming of Christ, which are intangled in earthly snares, and also continually to keep them fixed in this meditation, seing they cease not with their lightnesse to be carried hither and thither continually.

43 *To him beare all the Prophets.* Luke toucheth and gathereth the summe of the sermon briefly as we haue said: therefore is he so short in noting the fruit of the historie. Let vs knowe that the wordes vttered by Peter are not recited in this place: but that it is onely declared of what things he intreated. And wee must consider three things, That it is the proper office of Christ, to reconcile men to God, whē their sins are done away: that we haue remission of sinnes by faith: that this doctrine is not newe or of late inuented, but that it had all the Prophets of God since the

1. Cor. 15. 51

52.

1. Thessa. 4.

17.

the beginning of the world to beare witness of it. As touching the first, if God be pleased and pacified, by not imputing our sinnes, it appeareth hereby, that he hateth and is displeased with all mankind, vntill such time as they begin to please him by free pardon. Therefore wee are all condemned of sinne, which maketh vs subiect to the wrath of God, and bindeth vs with the guiltinesse of eternall death, and because we are destitute of righteousness in our selues, we are taught to flie vnto the mercie of God, as vnto our onely fortresse. When as he saith that the faithful receiue remission of sinnes, there is vnderstoode a hidden contrarietie betweene them and God. For God must needs offer it of his own accord that the faithful may receiue it. When as he saith that it is giuen by the name of Christ, his meaning is, that we return into Gods fauour by the benefite of Christ alone, because he hath once reconciled him to vs by his death: or as they say commonly, that we obtaine forgiveness of sinnes by Christ his mediation and comming betweene, and by none other meanes. Satan could neuer blot out of the minds of men the feeling of their guiltinesse, but that they were alwayes carefull to craue pardon at Gods hands: but forasmuch as there was but one way and means to obtaine pardon: miserable men, being deluded with the iuglings of Satan, did inuent to themselues wonderful Labarinths, in whose crooks and turnes they wearied themselues in vaine. This first error did first leade them away from the right way, because they asayed to deserue pardon, which is offered freely, and is receiued by faith alone. Afterwarde there were innumerable kindes of satisfactions inuented whereby they appeased God. The beginning thereof flowed in deede from the word of God, but forasmuch as when God gaue vnto the fathers the sacrifices and rites of oblations, hee shadowed Christ, blind and prophane men, setting Christ aside, and following a vaine shadowe, did corrupt all that which was Gods in sacrifices and satisfactions. Wherefore what sacrifices soeuer the Gentiles did vse since the beginning of the worlde, and those which the Turkes and Iewes vse at this day, may bee set against Christ as things altogether contrarie. The Papistes are neuer a whit better, saue onely that they sprinkle their satisfactions with the bloode of Christ: but they deale too disorderedly therein, because being not content with Christ alone, they gather to themselues on euerie side a thousande manner of sacrifices or satisfactions. Therefore whosoever desireth to haue remission of sins, let him not turne aside from Christ euen the least nayles breadth. When as we heare that we haue remission of sinnes by beleeuing, wee must vnderstande and knowe the force and nature of faith, as vndoubtedlie Peter intreated abundantly of this, after what sort we must beleue in Christ: and this is nothing else, but with the sincere affection of the minde to embrace him, as hee is set before vs in the Gospell, so that faith dependeth vpon the promises. Yet Peter seemeth to deale amisse, because whereas wee haue two principal things by our Sauour Christ, hee doeth onely make mention of the one of them, for he speaketh nothing of repentance and newnesse

of life, which ought not to be omitted in the summe of the Gospel. But we may easily answer, That, the regeneration of the Spirit is comprehended vnder faith, as it is an effect thereof. For wee beleue in Christ for this cause, partly, that he may restore vs into the fathers fauor by the free imputation of righteousness: partly that hee may sanctifie vs by his Spirit. And we know that we are adopted by God to be his children, vpon this condition, that hee may gouerne vs by his Spirit. Therefore it was sufficient for Peter to shewe, howe men who were by nature estranged from God, doe returne into fauour with him. As touching the third member we neede not reckon vpon al places of the Prophets, where they set before vs Christ to be the mediatur, who by obtaining pardon for our sinnes, doth reconcile God to vs: but this is their common order of teaching, and as it were their rule, to call backe all the godly vnto that couenant, which God made with Abraham, putting the mediatur betweene. Furthermore this point is very needfull to bee knowne, that the grace which was offered at length by Christ, is the same which the lawe and the Prophetes in times past, deliuered vnto the fathers to be hoped for. And surely it was of great force with Cornelius and such like, who did greatly reuerence the Law and Prophets, that they might know that that was performed & accomplished in very deepe in Christ, which was testified in the oracles of the Prophets. Therefore to the end the ministers, of the church may agree with the Prophets in their forme of teaching, let them study by preaching to set forth Christ: let them continually testifie that we must seeke righteousness at his hands alone, which consisteth vpon free remission of sinnes. This is another manner of antiquitie, than that which is shewed with great boasting of the Papists, whiles that they thrust in the rotten inuentions of their satisfactions, into the place of Christs blood.

44 And as Peter yet spake these words, the Spirit came downe vpon all which heard the word:

45 And they of the circumcision which beleued were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also were powred out the gifts of the holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speake with tongues, and glorifie God; Then Peter answered:

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not bee baptized who haue receiued the Spirit as well as we.

48 And hee commaunded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certaine daies.

44 And as Peter yet spake. God declareth now by a new miracle, that the doctrine of the Gospel is common as wel to the Gentiles as to the Iewes. And this is an excellent seale of the calling of the Gentiles: because the Lord would neuer haue vouchsafed to bestow vpon the Gentiles the graces of his spirit, vnlesse it had bin to declare that euen they were adopted together into the societie of the couenant. These gifts

mentioned by Luke, differ in deede from the grace of regeneration: & yet vndoubtedly God did by this meanes seale both Peter his doctrine, and also their faith and godlinesse which heard him. He saith that they were *all* endowed with the Spirit, like as we saw before, that they came all encouraged to learne & obey. This visibler signe representeth vnto vs as it were in a table, what an effectual instrument of gods power the preaching of the Gospel is. For he powred out his Spirit as Peter spake to the end he might shew, that he sendeth not teachers to that ende, that they may beat the aire with the vaine sound of their voice, but that he may worke mightily by their voice, and may quicken the same by the power of his Spirit, to the saluation of the godly. Thus doth Paule put the Galathians in minde, that they receiued the holy Ghost by the hearing of faith, and in another place he saith that he is the minister of the Spirit and not of the letter. The gift of the tongues and other such like things are ceased long agoe in the Church, but the Spirit of vnderstanding and of regeneration is of force and shall alwayes bee of force, which the Lorde coupleth with the externall preaching of the Gospel, that hee may keepe vs in reuerence of his word, and may preuent the deadly dotings, wherein brainesicke fellows inwrappe themselves, whiles that forsaking the worde, they inuent an erroneous and wandering Spirit. But it doth not nor shall not alwayes so fall out, that all those which heare the word with their outward eares, doe or shall also receiue the Spirit: and the ministers do seldome light vpon such hearers as Peter had: who are willing with one consent to follow God. Yet hee bringeth to passe that all the electe feelee in themselves the consent of the externall worde and of the secret power of the Spirit.

45 *The faithfull were astonied.* He calleth them faithfull who were as yet possessed with a wicked errour. So the Lorde doeth not by and by wipe away al clouds of ignorance from his, and yet they doe not darken the praise of faith before God, because he pardoneth errors and doeth vouchsafe to fauour it as if it were pure and plaine. And yet it is a wonder, that seing they knew that Peter was sent of God, they would now bee amased as at some straunge and newe thing, because God giueth the grace of his Spirit to those, to whom hee would haue Christ nowe preached, but the sodaine change is the cause of this, because whereas God vntill that day, had seperated the Gentiles from his people as strangers & aliants, he doth now fauor them both alike, & listeth them vp into the like degree of honour. Although wee bee also taught by this example, howe harde a matter it is for vs to winde out our selues out of our errors once conceiued, especially when they are of any continuance.

46 *For they heard them.* Hee expresseth what gifts of the Spirit were powred out vpon them, and therewithall he noteth the vse: to wit, that they had varietie of tongues giuen them, so that they did glorifie God with many tongues. Also it may be gathered out of this place, that the tongues were giuen them not onely for necessitie, seing the Gospel was
to

to be preached to straungers and to men of another language, but also to be an ornament and worship to the Gospel. But ambition did afterwarde corrupt this seconde vse, forasmuch as manie did translate that vnto pompe and vaine glorie, which they had receiued to set forth the dignitie of the heauenly wisdom: as Paule doth sharply reprove this fault in the Corinthians. Therefore no maruell if God tooke away that shortly after, which he had giuen, and did not suffer the same to be corrupt with longer abuse.

47 *Peter answered.* Peter reasoneth from the thing to the signe, for seeing that Baptisme is an addition or appurtenance of the spiritual grace: he which hath receiued the Spirite, is also apt to receiue Baptisme: and this is the most lawfull order, that the minister admit those vnto the receiuing of the vtward signe, whom God hath testified to be his children by the marke & pledge of his Spirit. So that faith and doctrine are first. And whereas vnlearned men inferre thereuppon that infantes are not to bee baptised, it is without all reason. I graunt that those who are straungers from the Church must be taught, before the signe of adoption be giuen them: but I say that the children of the faithfull, which are borne in the Church, are from their mothers wombe of the household of the kingdome of God. Yea the argument which they vse preposterously against vs, do I turne backe vpon themselues. For seeing that God hath adopted the children of the faithful before they be borne, I conclude thereupon that they are not to be defrauded of the outward sign. Otherwise men shal presume to take that from them which GOD hath granted them. As touching the manifest grace of the spirit, there is no absurditie therein, if it folow after baptisme in them. And as this testimonie maketh nothing for maintenace of their error, so it doth ströglie refute the errour of the Papists, who tie the grace of the spirit to the signes, and think that the same is fet from heauen with enchantments, as those witches did think that they did pul down the moon with their charmes. But for as much as Luke saith that these had the holie Ghost giuen them who were not as yet baptised, he sheweth that the spirit is not included in Baptisme. Lastlie we must note that the Apostles were content with water alone, when as they did baptise, and would to God this plainesse had bin reteined amongst their posteritie, and that they had not gathered heere and there diuers trifles, whereof baptisme is ful in poperie. They thinke that the woorthinesse of baptisme is adorned with oile, salt, spittle, waxe candles, whereas they are rather filthie pellutions, which corrupt the pure and natural institution of Christ.

48 *And he commanded them to be baptized.* It was not of necessitie that baptisme should be ministred by Peters hand, as Paul doth likewise testifie that he baptised few at Corinthus, for other ministers might take this charge vpon them. Whereas he saith in the name of the Lord, it must not bee restrained vnto the fourme, as wee haue said in the third chapter: but because Christ is the proper scope of baptisme, therefore are wee said to bee baptised in his name, when as Luke saith last

of al that Peter was requested by Cornelius and his kinsmen, that he would taria a few daies, he commendeth in them their desire to profit. They were indeed indued with the holy ghost, but they were not so com to the top, but that confirmation was as yet profitable for them. And according to their example, so often as opportunitie to profit offereth it selfe, we must vse it diligentlie: and let vs not swel with pride, which stoppeth the way before doctrine.

CHAP. XI.

- 1 **A**nd the Apostles and brethren which were in Iudea, heard that the Gentiles also had embraced the word of God.
- 2 And when Peter was gone vp to Ierusalem, those which were of the Circumcision reasoned with him,
- 3 Saying: Thou wentest in vnto men vncircumcised, and hast eaten with them.
- 4 And Peter began, and expounded to them in order saying:
- 5 I was in the Citie Ioppa, praying, and being in a trance I saw a vision: to wit, a certaine vessell comming downe from heauen, like a great sheet, tyed by the fower corners, which came euen vnto me:
- 6 Which when I considered earnestlie, I sawe then fower scored beastes of the earth, and wilde beastes, and creeping thinges, and byrds of the heauen.
- 7 And I heard a voice saying to me: Arise Peter, slea, and eate.
- 8 Then I said, Not so Lorde: Because there neuer entred into my mouth, any common or vncleane thing.
- 9 And the voice answered me the second time from heauen: Prophane not thou those things which God hath made cleane.
- 10 And this was done thrise. And they were all receiued into heauen againe.
- 11 And behold, the same howre three men stood nigh the house wherein I sate, being sent vnto me from Cesarea.
- 12 And the Spirit commaunded me to goe with them, doubting nothing. And they came with mee, and these fixe brethren. And wee entred the mans house.
- 13 And hee tolde vs howe he had seene an Angel standing at his house, and saying to him: Sende men to Ioppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter,
- 14 Who shall speake to thee wordes, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.
- 15 Furthermore when I began to speake, the holy Ghost fell downe vpon them, euen as vpon vs at the beginning.
- 16 And I remembered the worde of the Lorde, howe hee had saide: Iohn truly hath baptized with water, but you shall bee baptized with the holie Ghost.
- 17 Therefore seeing that God had giuen them the like gift as vnto vs, which beleeued in the Lord Iesus Christ, who was I that I could let God?

18 When

18 *When they had heard these things, they helde their peace, and glorified God, saying: then hath God also giuen vnto the Gentiles repentance vnto life.*

1 *And the Apostles.* Whereas Luke declareth that the same of one house which was conuerted; was spread abroad euery where amongst the brethren, that did arise by reason of admiration: for the Iewes accounted it as a monster, that the Gentiles should be gathered vnto the, as if they should haue heard that there had been men made of stones: againe the immoderate loue of their nation did hinder them frō acknowledging the worke of god. For wee see that through this ambition and pride, the Church was troubled: because the equalitie which did diminish their dignitie was not tollerable. For which cause they did contend stoutly, to bring the necks of the Gentiles vnder the yoke. But for as much as it was foretolde by so many prophesies of the prophets, that the church should be gathered of all people after the comming of the Messias, and forasmuch as Christ had giue commandement to his Apostles, touching the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, how can it be that the conuersion of a few men shoulde moue some, as some strange thing, and should terrifie other some, as if it were some monster? I answer, that whatsoeuer was foretold touching the calling of the Gentiles, it was so taken, as if the gentiles shoulde bee made subiect to the law of Moses, that they might haue a place in the church. But the manner of the calling, the beginning whereof they saw then, was not onely vnknown, but it seemed to bee quite contrary to reason. For they did dreame that it was vnpossible that the Gentiles could bee mixed with the sonnes of Abraham, and be made one bodie with them, (the ceremonies being taken away) but that there should bee great iniurie done to the couenant of God, for to what end serued the law saue only to bee the myd wal to note out the disagreement? Secondly because they were acquainted with that difference during their whole life, the vnlooked for newnesse of the thing doth so pearce them, that they did forget all that which ought to haue quieted their minds: finally they do not straightway comprehend the mysteric, which as Paul teacheth, was vnknown to the Angels from the creation of the world.

2 *They reasoned with him.* Obstinacie doeth for the most part accompany error. This was now a fault hauing in it too grosse ignorance, in that they did not quietly receiue the Gentiles into their bosom, vnited to them by the same Spirit of faith. But they doe not only leape backe, but also contend with Peter contentiously, and blame him for his fact, which deserued great praise. They heare that the gentiles haue embraced the word of God, what letteth them then, frō imbracing them, that they may be coupled together vnder the gouernment of one God? For what more holy bond can there be, then when all mé with one consent are coupled & ioyned to God? And why should not those grow together into one body, who make the Messias of God their head? But because they saw the externall forme of the law broken, they thought that

heauen.

heauen and earth did goe together. And note, that although Luke saide before that the apostles and brethren had heard this same, yet he spake nothing of offence, but he bringeth in now as it were a new sect of men, which did contend with Peter. The brethren saith he, heard, and there an ende: it followeth, *When Peter* was come to Ierusalem those which were of the circumcision did contend with him: who were vndoubtedlie vnlike to the first: againe these wordes *peri tomes*, doe not simplie signifie the Iewes, but those who were too much addicted to keepe the ceremonies of the lawe. For there were none of Ierusalem in Christs flock at that time, saue only those which were circumcised: from whom then could he distinguish those men? Lastly, it seemeth to be a thing vnlike to be true that the Apostles, and those which were moderate beeing of the number of the faithfull, did attempt this cumbate. For though they had been offended, yet they might haue conferred with Peter priuately, & haue demanded some reason of his fact. By these reasons am I moued to think that those are said to be of the circumcision, who did make so great account of circumcision, that they graunted no man a place in the kingdom of god, vnlesse he took vpon him the profession of the law, and being admitted into the church by this holy rite, did put off vncleannesse.

3 *Vnto men being vncircumcised.* This was not forbidden by the lawe of God, but it was a tradition which came from the fathers. And yet notwithstanding Peter doth not obiekt that they dealt too hardly with him in this point, and that he was not bound by the necessitie of mans lawe, he omitteth all this defence: and doth only answere, that they came first vnto him, & that they were offered vnto him as it were by the hande of God. And here we see the rare modestie of Peter, because whereas trusting to the goodnesse of the cause, he might haue iustly despised vnskillfull men, who did trouble him vniustly: yet doth he mildely excuse himselfe as it becommeth brethren. This was no small triall, in that hee was vnworthilie accused, because he had obeyed God faithfully: but because he knew that this lawe was inioyned the whole church, that euery man be ready to giue an account of his doctrine and life, so often as the matter requireth: & he remembered that he was one of the flocke, hee doth not only suffer himselfe to bee ruled, but submitteth himselfe willinglie to the iudgement of the church. Doctrine in deede, if it be of God, is placed about the chaunce & die of mans iudgement, but because the Lord will haue prophesie iudged, his seruants must not refuse this condition, that they proue themselues to be such as they will be accounted. But we shal see anone how farre the defence both of doctrine, as also of facts ought to extend. For this present we must know this, that Peter doeth willingly answere for himselfe, when his fact is reprobud. And if the pope of Rome be Peter his successour, why is not he bound by the same lawe? Admit we graunt that this submission was voluntarie: yet why doth not the successour imitate suche an example of modestie shewed vnto him? Although we need no long circumstance here; for if that be true whiche the Popes spue out in their sacrilegious decrees, Peter did treacherously betray and forsake the priniledges of their seat: and so hee betraied the

the sea of Rome. For after that they haue made the Pope the iudge o all the whole world, affirming that he is not subiect to mans iudgement: after that they haue lifted him vp aboue the cloudes, that being free fro giuing an account, his will and pleasure may stande for a reason: they make him soorthwith patrone of the Apostolike seate, stoutlie to defend the priuiledges thereof. Of what great sluggishnesse shall Peter then be condemned, if hee did loose his right giuen him of God by yeelding so cowardly? Why did not he at least obiect, that, that he was free from the lawes, and exempt from the common sort? But he vseth no such preface, but entreth the cause without making any delay. And let vs remember, that there is nothing which hindereth vs from contemning that idoll safely, seeing that vsurping such vnbrideled tyrannie, he hath blotted himselfe out of the number of the Bishops.

And Peter beginning. Because this narration is all one with that which we had in the chapter next going before, and because it is repeated almost in the very same wordes: if any thing need to be expounded let the Readers repaire thither. The purpose of Peter and all the whole summe of his speech, shall appeare by the conclusion. Yet before I come thither, we must briefly mark that he maketh the preaching of the Gospell the cause of saluation. *Thou shalt heare* (saith he) wordes wherein thou maiest haue saluation, not because saluation is included in mans voice: but because God offering his sonne there, vnto eternal life, doth also cause vs to inioy him by faith. This is assuredly wonderfull goodnesse of God, who maketh men ministers of life, who haue nothing, but matter of death in themselves, and which are not only subiect to death in themselves, but are also deadly to others. Neuerthelesse the filthie vnthankfulness of the worlde bewrayeth it selfe in this point, which loeking true and certaine saluation offered vnto it, and forsaking it when it lyeth at the feete, doth imagine diuers and vaine saluations, in seeking which, it had rather gape beeing hungrie, then to bee filled with the grace of God which meeteth it, and is present.

16 *I remembered the worde of the Lorde.* Wee haue sufficiently declared in the first chapter, that when Christ vttered that sentence, hee did not make a comparison between two baptismes, but that he intended to declare what difference there was betweene him and Iohn. For as wee distinguish the signe from his truth, so it is good to distinguish the minister from the authour: least mortall man challenge that which is proper to God. Man hath the signe in his hand; it is Christ alone which washeth and regenerateth. For it skilleth much whether mens mindes be directed in seeking the graces of God: because they shal not receiue one drop without Christ. Therefore there is this generall difference between Christ & all the ministers of the church, because they giue the externall signe of water: but he fulfilleth and perfourmeth the effect of the signe by the power of his Spirit. The Readers were to be admonished of this thing againe in this place: because many doe falsly inferre that Iohns baptism & ours are not all one: whiles that Christ challenging to himselfe the spirit, doeth leaue nothing for Iohn saue water alone.

Acts. 1. 7.

But

But if any man trusting to this testimonie, do make Baptisme a colde spectacle and void of all grace of the Spirit, hee shall bee also greatly deceiued. For the holy Scripture yseth to speake two manner of wayes of the Sacramentes. For because Christe is not vnfaithfull in his promises, he doth not suffer that to be vain which he doth institute. But when as the scripture doth attribute to baptisme strength to wash & regenerate, it ascribeth al this to Christ^l, and doth onlie teach what he woorketh by his spirit by the hand of man and the visible signe. Where Christ is thus ioined with the minister and the efficacy of the spirit with the sign, there is so much attributed to the sacraments as is needful. But that coniunction must not be so confused, but that mens mindes being drawn from mortal and frail things, and things like to themselues, and from the elements of the world, they must learn to seek for saluation at Christes hande, & to look vnto the power of his spirit alone: because he misseth the mark of faith, whosoever turneth aside euen but a little from the spirit vnto the signes: & he is a sacrilegious person, who taketh euen but an inch of Christes praise, that he may deck, man therewith. And we must also remember, that Christ did comprehend vnder the word *spirit*, not only the gift of tongues and such like things, but all the whole grace of our renewing. But because these gifts were an excellent argument of Christ his power, this sentence may wel bee applyed vnto them: I will make this more plaine: seeing that Christ did bestow vpon the Apostles the visible graces of the Spirit, hee did plainly declare that the Spirit was in his hand. So that by this meanes he did testifie, that he is the alone authour of cleannesse, righteousness, & of the whole regeneration. And Peter applyeth it vnto his purpose thus, that for as muche as Christe did goe before, carrying with him the force of Baptisme, it became him to followe with the addition, that is, the outwarde signe of water,

17 *Whowas I.* Now doe we see to what end, Peter made that narration: to wit, tha he might declare, that God was the authour and gouernour of all the whole matter. Therefore the state of the question consisteth in the authoritie of God: whether meat bee not of more weight then mens counsels. Peter affirmeth that hee did nothing but that which was rightly and orderly done, because he obeyed god: hee sheweth that he preached the doctrine of the gospel, neither amisse, neither rashly, where Christ bestowed the graces of his Spirit. The approbatiō of our doctrine, and also our deedes must be brought to this rule so often as me call vs to an account. For whosoever stayeth himselfe vpon the commendement of god, he hath defence enough: if men be not content, there is no cause why he should passe for their iudgements any more. And Hereby wee gather that the faithfull ministers of gods worde, may in such sort giue an account of their doctrine, that they may no whit impayr the credit: and certaintie thereof: to wit, if they shew that it was giuen the by God, but if they shall deale with vnjust men, who will not be enforced with the reuerence of God to yeeld, let vs let them alone with their obstinacie, appealing vnto the day of the Lorde. And we must also note, that

that we doe not only resist God by struiuing against him, but also by lingering, if we doe not that which our calling requireth and which is proper to it. For Peter saith, that he cannot denie baptisme and brotherly fellowship to the Gentiles, but that he should be an enimie to God. But he should haue assayed nothing which was manifestly contrarie to the grace of God. That is true in deed, but he which doth not receiue those whom god offereth, and shutteth the gate which god openeth, he hindereth the work of God so much as in him lieth: as we say at this day, that those men make warre against god, who are set against the baptising of infants: because they most cruelly exclude those out of the church who god hath adopted into the church: and they depriue those of the outward signe whom God vouchsafeth to call his children. Like vnto this is that kind of resisting, in that many dissemblers, who, whiles they bee magistrates ought to assist according to their office, the martyres of Christ, goe about to stop their mouthes and to take from them their libertie. For because they hate the truth, they would haue it suppressed.

18 *When they heard these things they were quieted.* The end doth shew that those were not moued with malice, which did contend with Peter. For this is an euident signe of godlinesse, in that beeing thoroughly instructed touching the will of God, they cease forthwith to contend. By which example we are taught that those are not to be despised, who beeing offended through vnaduised zeale, reprove any thing wrongfully: but that their consciences must be appeased by the worde of god, which are troubled by error, and that their docilitie is tryed at least thus far forth. As touching vs, we doe hereby in like sort learne, whereuppon our iudgemēt must depend: namely, vpon the sole & simple beck of god. For this honor is due to him, that his will be to vs the certaine and principall rule of truth and iustice. So often as it is requisite for vs to know the cause of any thing, the Lorde doth not conceale the same from vs: but to the end he may accustome our faith vnto iust obedience, hee telleth vs sometimes simply and plainly that this or that thing pleaseth him. Hee which graunteth libertie to himselfe to inquire farther, and taketh a delight in his curiositie, doth nothing els but throw himself headlong with diuelish boldnesse. And Luke doth not only declare that these men held their peace, but that they gaue glory also to God. Some are enforced by shame to hold their peace, who notwithstanding keepe in that in their minds, which they dare not vtter. That is rather a dissemblance of modestie, the docilitie. But these men do so thoroughly submit themselves to God, that they are not afraide nor ashamed to recant by and by.

Then hash God. Luke doth briefly declare in these wordes, what the gospell containeth, and to what end it tendeth: to wit, that God may reconcile men to himselfe, being renued by his Spirit. The worde *Repentance*, alone is expressed in this place: but when he addeth *vnto life*, it appeareth plainly that it is not separated from faith. Therefore whosoeuer will rightly profit, in the gospell, let him put off the old man, and thinke
vpon

Ephc. 4. 22.

vpō newnesse of life: that done let him know for a certaintie that he is not called in vain vnto repentance, but that there is saluation prepared for him in Christ. So shall it come to passe that the hope & assurance of saluation shall rest vpo the free mercie of god alone, & that the forgiveness of sins shall notwithstanding be no cause of sluggish securitie. This member to *giue repentance*, may be expounded two maner of wayes: either that God graunted to the Gentiles place for repentaunce, when as hee would haue his gospel preached to them: or that he circumcised their heartes by his Spirite, as Moses saith: and made them fleshy harts of stonie hearts, as saith Ezechiel. For it is a worke proper to God alone, to fashion, and to beget men againe, that they may begin to bee new creatures: and it agreeth better with this second sense, it is not so much racked, and it agreeth better with the phrase of scripture.

Deut. 30. 6.

Ezc. 11. 9.

19 Those therfore which were dispersed by reason of the tribulation which happened about Steeuen, went into Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none, saue only to the Iewes.

20 And there were certain of them men of Cyprus and Cyrena, who entering into Antioch, spake with the Grecians, preaching the Lord Iesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, Therefore a great number when they beleeued were turned vnto the Lord.

22 And the tidings of them came vnto the eares of the church which was at Ierusalem, and they sent Barnabas that he might goe to Antioch.

23 Who when he was come and had seen the grace of god, he reioyced, and did exhort all, that with purpose of heart they would continue cleeuing to the Lord.

24 Because he was a good man, and full of the holy ghost and faith. And there was a great multitude added vnto the Lord.

19 Those which were scattered abroad. Luke returneth now vnto the former historie & vnto that which folowed in the same. For he had said before, that after that Steeuen was slain, the crueltie of the wicked increased, & many fled hither & thither for feare: so that the Apostles were almost left alone at Ierusalem. whereas the church was thus torn in peeces, & feare did cause those which were fled to keep silence, or els contempt of strangers. He declareth that that euent did folow which no man would haue hoped for: for as the seed is sown that it may bring forth frute: so it came to passe through their flight & scattering abroad, that the gospel was spred abroad in nations which were farre of, which was included before within the walles of one citie as in a barne. In like sort it came to passe that the name of Christ passing ouer mountains & seas, did flow euen vnto the farthest parts of the world. And by this meanes according to the prophesie of Esay, the consumption did abound in righteousnes. If so many godly me had not been expelled out of Ierusalem, Cyprus had heard nothing, Phenicia had heard nothing of Christ: yea Italy & Spain which wer farther off had heard nothing. But the Lord brought to passe that of many torne mebers did arise mo bodies. For how came it to passe that there were churches gathered at Rome & at Puteolum saue onely because a few exiled men, & such as fled away had hrought the Gospell thither

thither with them? And as God did at that time make the indeuours of Satan frustrate after a wonderfull sort, so we need not doubt but that euen at this day he will make to himself triumphes of the crosse and persecution: that the church may better grow together though it be scattered abroad. Phenicia ioyneth to Syria & is nigh to Galilee. Antioch is a most famous citie of Syria, at which part it is ioyned to Cilicia.

Speaking to none. Peraduenture they were letted not only with fear of persecutio, that they durst not speake to the Gentiles, but also with that foolish religion, in that they thought that the childrens bread was thrown to the dogs, whereas notwithstanding Christ had commanded that the gospel should be preached to all the world after his resurrection.

Mar. 16. 13.

20 Luke doth at length declare that certain of the brought this treasure euen vnto the Gentiles. And Luke calleth these Grecians not *ellenes* but *ellenistai*. Therefore some say that those came of the Iewes; yet did they inhabit Grecia, which I do not allow. For seeing the Iewes whom he mentioned a little before, wer partly of Cyprus, they must needs be reckoned in that number: because the Iewes count Cyprus a part of Grecia. But Luke distinguisheth the first those, whom he calleth afterward *ellenistas*. Furthermore, forasmuch as hee had saide that the worde was preached at the beginning only to the Iewes, & he ment those who being banished out of their owne countrie, did liue in Cyprus & Phenicia, correcting as it were this exception, he saith, that some of them did teach the Grecians. This contrarietie doth cause me to expound it of the Gentiles. For Luke his meaning is, that a few did more freely preach the Gospell, because the calling of the Gentiles was not vnknown to the. But the constancie of them all deserueth no small prayse, because being deliuered as it were out of the midst of death, they are not afraid to do their dutie toward God euen with danger: whence we gather to what end, & how far forth christians may flie persecution: to wit, that they may spende the residue of their life in spreading abroad the glory of God. If any man demaund how it came to passe, that strangers lately comming and such as might haue bin suspected among all the Iewes, & hated of them, because they were banished out of Ierusalem, were so bold: I answere that this came to passe through the singular motion of God, & that they consulted together sodainly, according to the occasion offered them. For this deliberation is not of flesh and blood.

21 *The hand of the Lord was.* Luke proueth by the successe, that the gospel was offered vnto the Gentiles also by the brethren of Cyprus & Cyrene not rashly nor vnadvisedly: because their labour was frutesfull and profitable. But such increase should neuer haue folowed, vnlesse god had commaunded & fauoured. Therefore it followeth that it pleased god that the Gentiles should be called. The *hand* as it is wel knowe, doth signifie power & strength. Therefore this is Luke his meaning, that god did testifie by his present aid that the Gentiles were called together with the Iewes through his directio, to be made partakers of the grace of Christ. And this blessing of God, serued not a little to confirme the minds of all men. This place did also teach vs, that what paines soeuer the ministers

of

1. Cor. 3.

of God take in teaching, it shalbe all vaine and voide, vnlesse God blesse their labours from heauen: For we may plant and water, as Paule teacheth, but the encrease commeth from God alone, in whose hande the heartsof men are, that he may bend and frame the same at his pleasure. Therefore as often as we are to intreate of faith, let vs alwayes remember this speech, that God wrought by his ministers, and that hee made their doctrine effectually by his hand, that is, by the secrete inspiration of the Spirite. Therefore let the minister attempt nothing trusting to his owne wit and industrie, but let him commit his labour to the Lord, vpon whose grace the whole successe dependeth: and where doctrine shall worke effectually, let those which shal beleue thank god for their faith. Furthermore, we must note that which Luke saith, that many were turned vnto god by faith: because he doth very well expresse the force and nature of faith, that it is not idle and cold, but such as restoreth me (who were before turned away from god) vnto his gouernment, and bindeth them vnto his righteousnesse.

22 *And the ridings.* If this report had been brought before Peter did excuse himselfe, those good men should haue been reprobued of manye whose ministerie notwithstanding god had sealed with the grace of his Spirit: but that superstition was now wiped away out of their minds, forasmuch as god had by euident signes declared, that no nation ought to be counted profane. Therefore they contend no longer, neither doe they count it a point of rashnesse, that som durst preach Christ vnto the gentiles, but by sending helpe, they testifie that they allowe that which they had done. Furthermore, this was the cause why they sent Barnabas. The Apostles did at that time beare all the burden of the kingdome of Christ: therefore it was their dutie to frame and set in order churches euerie where: to keepe all the faithfull wheresoeuer dispersed in the pure consent of faith: to appoint ministers and pastours wheresoeuer there was any number of the faithfull. The craftie wiliness of Satan is well known: so soone as he seeth a gate set open for the gospel, he indeuoueth by al meanes to corrupt that which is sincere: whereby it came to passe, that diuers heresies brake out togeather with Christes doctrine. Therefore the greater giftes euery Church hath, the more careful ought it to be, least Satan mixe or trouble any thing amongst the ignorant, and those who are not as yet established in the right faith: because it is the easiest matter in the worlde to corrupt corne in the blade. To conclude, Barnabas was sent to bring them farther forward in the principles of faith, to set things in some certaine order, to giue the building which was begun some forme, that there might be a lawfull state of the church.

23 *When he had seene the grace of God.* By these wordes Luke teacheth first, that the gospel which they had receiued, was true: secondly, that Barnabas sought nothing els but the glorie of Christ. For when he saith that he saw the grace of God, & that he exhorted them to goe forward, hereby we gather, that they were wel taught. And the ioy is a testimonie of sincere godlines. Ambition is euer more enuious & malicious: so that

we see many seeke for prayse by reprocuing other men, because they are more desirous of their owne glory then of the glory of Christ. But the faithfull seruants of Christ must reioice (as did Barnabas) when they see the gospel encrease, by whomsoeuer God shall make his name known. And assuredly those which help one another, so that they acknowledge that all the effect which springeth thence is the worke of God, wil neuer enuie one another, neither will they seeke to carpe one another, but will with one mouth and minde prayse the power of God. Againe, this is worth the noting, that Luke doth attribute the faith of the men of Antioch, and whatsoeuer was worthie praise there, to the grace of God. He might haue reckoned vp all those vertues which might make for the commendation of men: but hee comprehendeth what excellencie soeuer was in that church vnder this word *grace*. Lastly, we must note Barnabas his exhortatiō. We haue alreadie said that Barnabas did subscribe to the former doctrine which they had embraced: but least doctrine fall away, it is most requisite that it be thoroughly imprinted in the minds of the faithfull by continuall exhortations. For seeing that we haue to encounter continually with so many & such strong aduersaries, & our mindes are so slipperie, vnlesse euerie man arme himselfe diligently, it wil by & by fall away, which thing infinite numbers doe shew to be true, by their falling away. Whereas he setteth downe this manner of perseuerance, that they continue with purpose of heart: wee are hereby taught that faith hath taken deepe roote then, when it hath a place in the heart. Wherefore it is no matuell, if scarce one of tenne of those who profess faith doe stand vnto the end, seeing that verie few know what the affection and purpose of heart meaneth.

24 *For he was a good man.* Barnabas is commended with the commendation of the holy Ghost: yet we must knowe that there was respect had not so much of him as of vs. For all those are condemned of vngodlinesse and malice, who enuie other mens labours, and are grieved when they see the same haue good successe.

Also wee must note the Epithites vsed, in the description of a good man, full of the holy Ghost, full of faith. For after that hee had said that hee was an vpright and good man, he sheweth from what fountaine this goodnesse did flowe, that abandoning the affections of the flesh, hee did with all his heart imbrace godlines, hauing the spirit to be his guide. But why doth he separate faith from the Spirite, whose gift it is? I aunswere, that it is not named seuerallie, as if it were a diuers thing, but it is rather set forth as a principal token, whereby it might appeare that Barnabas was full of the holy ghost.

There was a great multitude added. Though the number of the godlie was alreadie great, yet Luke saith, that it increased by Barnabas his coming. Thus doth the building of the church go forward when one doth helpe another with mutuall consent, and one doeth gently allowe that which another hath begun.

25 And Barnabas went to Tarsus to seeke Saul.

26 And when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. And it hapred that they lined a whole yeere in the church, & did teach a great multitude, so that at Antioch the disciples were first called christians.

25 Barnabas his simplicitie is commended to vs nowe the seconde time, that whereas he might haue borne the chiefeft swinge at Antioch yet went he into Cilicia, that he might fet Paull thence, who hee knewe should be preferred before him. Therfore we see how, forgetting himselfe he respecteth nothing, but that Christ may be chiefe, how hee setteth before his eyes the edifying of the church alone, how he is content with the prosperous successe of the Gospel. Therefore Barnabas is no whit afraid least Paul doe any whit debase him by his comming, so hee glorifie Christ.

26 He addeth afterward, that such a holy concord was blessed from heauen: for this was no small honour, that the holy name of christians beganne there for all the whole worlde. Though the Apostles had been long time at Ierusalem, yet god had not vouchsafed to bestowe vpon his church which was there, this excellent title of his sonne: whether it were because at Antioch much people was growne together into one bodie, as well of Iewes, as of Gentiles: or whether it were because the church might bee better ordered in time of peace: or because they were more bolde to confesse their faith. There were in very deed christians both at Ierusalem and also in Samaria before that time: and we know that Ierusalem was the first fountaine from which christianitie did flowe. And what is it els to be a disciple of Christe, but to be a christian? But when they began plainly to bee called that which they were, the vse of the name serued greatly to set forth the glory of Christe, because by this meanes they referred all their religion vnto Christe alone. This was therefore a most excellent worship for the citie of Antioch, that Christ brought forth his name thence like a standerd, whereby it might bee made knowne to all the worlde that there was some people whose Capitaine was Christ, and which did glory in his name. But and if Rome had such a colour of pride, who were able to suffer the proud boastings of the Pope and his adherents? They would then not without cause thunder out, that Rome is the mother and head of al churches: but it is wel, that seeing they challenge to themselves whatsoeuer, when they come to the matter, they are found altogether vaine, yea Antioch it selfe doth plainlie proue, that the estate of one place is not continuall, Admit we graunt the Romanes these plausible titles. We haue been somtimes: shall they yet be so bold as to take one halfe of that which belongeth to Antioch? And is the dignitie of Antioch the greater nowe, because the Christians had their name thence? Yea it is rather a manifest mirrour of the horrible vengeance of God. For seeing there is nothing to be seen there but euill fauoured wastinesse, it remaineth that wee learne to humble our selues vnder the mightie hand of God, and that wee knowe, that vn-

thankfull

thankful men haue not so much libertie graunted them, that they may freely mocke God.

27 *In those dayes came prophets from Ierusalem to Antioch.*

28 *And one of them named Agabus arose, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great famine throughout the whole worlde, which happened vnder Claudius Caesar.*

29 *And as euery one of the disciples was able, they decreed euerie man to sende succour to the brethren which dwelt in Iudea.*

30 *Which thing they did, sending it vnto the Elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

27 Luke commendeth in this place the faith of the men of Antioch by the frute, because they induoured to relieue the pouertie of that church (from whence they receiued the gospel) with their abundance: & that did they vnrequested. Such earnest care for the brethren doth sufficiently declare how seriously they worshipped Christ the head of al. Luke doth signifie that the fame of that church was spread abroad: when hee saith, that there came excellent men thither from Ierusalem. But for as much as the word *Prophet* is taken diuers waies in the new testament, as we may learne by the former Epistle to the Corinthians, those are called prophets in this place, who were indued with the gift of prophesying as the foure daughters of Philip shall haue the same title giuen them hereafter. And forasmuch as the foretelling of the famine is attributed to Agabus alone, we may hereby gather, that this was graunted to euery one by a certaine measure to know things to come.

28 *He signified by the Spirit.* Luke doth plainly expresse that the Spirit of God was the authour of this prophesie, that wee may knowe that it was not a coniecture taken by the starres or some other naturall causes: again, that Agabus did not play the Philosopher after the maner of men: but he vttered that which God had appointed by the secreete inspiration of the Spirit. Barrenesse may indeed be sometimes fortold by the disposition of the starres, but there is no certaintie in such foretellings, both because of the opposite concourses, and also especially, because god doth gouerne earthly things at his pleasure, farre otherwise than can be gathered by the starres, that he may lead men away from the peruerse beholding of starres. And although these foretellings haue their degree, yet the prophesies of the Spirit doe far exceed them. But it seemeth that the foretelling of the famine was vnluckie, and not to be wished for: for to what end was it for me to be made miserable before their time, by hauing the vnhappy euent fortold? I answer, that there be many causes, for which it is expedient that men should be warned before in time whē the iudgements of God hang ouer their heads, & punishmentes due to their sins. I omit others which are vsuall in the prophetes, bicause they haue a space graūted wherein to repēt, that they may preuent gods iudgement, who haue prouoked his wrath against theselues: bicause the faithfull are instructed in time, to arme themselves with patience: because the obstinate

wickednesse of wicked men is conuict: because both good and euill learne that miseries doe not come by chaunce, but that they are punishments wherewith God doth punish the sinnes of the world: because those are awaked out of their sleepe and sluggishnesse by this meanes, who tooke great delight in their vices. The profit of this present prophesie appeareth by the text, because the men of Antioch were thereby pricked forward to releue their brethren which were in miserie.

Which happened vnder Claudius. Suetonius also maketh mention of this famine, who saith that there were crustes or shardes throwen at Claudius his head in the midst of the market, and that he was so fore afraid of stoning, that he had a singular care afterward during his whole life, to make prouision for victuall. And Iosephus in his fifteenth booke of antiquitie, saith: that Iudea was sore oppressed with scarcitie, by reason of continuall drought.

Gal. 3.

29 But here ariseth a question, seeing that the miserie was common to all, why ought they rather to haue succoured one people, then all the rest? I answer, that for as much as Iudea was impouerished with great destructions of warres and other miseries, the men of Antioch were not without cause more moued with the miseries of the brethren which were there: secondly, the greater the rage of the enemies was, the more wretched was the estate of the brethren. Finally, Paul doth sufficiently declare in the Epistle to the Galathians, that Iudea had certaine especiall necessities, whereof all other had regard not without cause. And this thankfulness deserued no small commendations, in that the men of Antioch thought that they ought to helpe the needie brethren from whom they had receiued the gospel. For there is nothing more iust then that those shoulde reape earthly thinges who haue sown spirituall thinges: As euery man is too much bent to prouide for himselfe: euery man might readilie haue excepted and objected: Why shall not I rather prouide for my selfe? But when they call to minde howe greatly they are indebted to the brethren, omitting that carefulnesse, they turne them selues to help them. In summe, this almes had a double end: for the me of Antioch did the dutie of charitie toward their needy brethren, & they did also testifie by this signe, what great account they made of the Gospel, whiles that they honoured the place whence it came.

2 Cor. 8. 6.

As euerie man was able. Wee see the men of Antioch obserue in this place, that meane, which Paul prescribeth to the Corinthians: whether they did this of themselves, or being instructed by him: and it is not to bee doubted, but that hee continued like to himselfe in both places. Therefore wee must follow this rule, that euerie one, considering how much is graunted him, impart the same courteously with his brethren: as one that must giue an account: so shall it come to passe that he which is but poore shal haue a liberal mind, & that a smal reward shalbe counted a fat & gorgeous sacrifice. By this word *determined*, Luke giueth vs to vnderstand, that their oblation was voluntarie. Which thing ought so

to be, as Paul teacheth, that we reach out our hand vnto the needie, not as cōstrained, but cheerefully. Whē as he nameth euery one it is all one as if he shuld say, That one did not prescribe another a law, neither did they burthē one another with their preiudice, but that euery mā did bestow his liberalitie as semed good to himself, and we must note the word *diaconias*, wherby we are taught that rich mē haue greater abūdance giuen thē vpon that conditiō, that they may be the ministers of the poore in the dispensation cōmitted to thē by God. Lastly, Luke teacheth that the blessing was sent not to all the whole nation, but only to those that were, of the hōusholde of faith: not because wee ought neuer to vse any bountifūlness or curtesie toward the vnbeleeuers, seeing loue ought to extend it selfe vnto all mankind: but because those ought to be preferred, whome God hath ioined and linked to vs more neere, and with a more holy band.

30 *Sending it vnto the Elders.* Wee must note two things in this place, that the men of Antioch did choose faithfull men, and of known honestie to carrie their blessing: secondly, that they sent it vnto the Elders, that they might wisely bestow the same. For if almes be throwē into the midst of the common people, or bee set in the midst where euerie one may take what he will, euery man will by and by take it to himself as if it were some common pray: and so he that is most bolde will defraude the needie, yea through his greedinesse hee will cut the throates of the hungrie. Therefore let vs marke these places, which teach that we must not only deale vprightly and faithfully, but that there is also an order & wisdom required as well in making choice, as in all our administratiō. Those are called Elders in whose hands the gouernment of the church was, among whom the Apostles were chiefe: the men of Antioche refer the holy money (which they had appointed for the poore) to their discretiō. If any mā obiekt that this was the office of the deacōs, forasmuch as the Apostles did denie that they could both serue tables, and attend vpon doctrine, the answer is easie, that the Deacons were appointed ouer tables in such sort, that yet notwithstanding they were vnder the Elders, neither did they any thing but at their appointment.

CHAP. XII.

- 1 **A** Bout that time, Herod the king, stretched out his hande to afflict certaine of the Church.
- 2 And he killed Iames the brother of Iohn with the sword:
- 3 And when he saw that this pleased the Iewes, he proceeded to take Peter also, Then were the daies of sweete bread.
- 4 Whē he had taken him also, he put him in prison, deliuering him to four quarters of souldiars to be kept, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.
- 5 Therefore Peter was kept in prison. But continuall prayer was made for him of the church of God.

1 Here foloweth new persecution raised by Herod. We see that the church had som short truce, that it might as it were by a short breathing recouer some courage against the time to come, and that it might then fight afresh. So at this day there is no cause why the faithfull hauing borne the brunes of one or two conflicts should promise theselues rest, or should desire such a calling as old overworn souldiars vse to haue : let this suffice them if the Lord graunt the some time wherein they may recouer their strength. This Herod was Agrippa the greater, the sonne of Aristobulus, whom his father slue. Iosephus doth no where call him Herod, it may be, because he had a brother who was king of Chalcis, whose name was Herod. This man was incensed to afflicte the church not so much for any loue he had to religion, as that by this meanes hee might flatter the common people, which did otherwise not greatly fauour him, or rather he was moued hereunto with tyrannicall crueltie, because hee was afraid of innouation, which tyrants doe alwaies feare, least it trouble the quiet estate of their dominion. Yet it is likely that he did shed innocent blood, that according to the common craft of kinges he might gratifie a furious people ; because Saint Luke will shortly after declare, that Peter the Apostle was put into prison that he might be a pleasaunt spectacle.

Hee killed Iames. Vndoubtedly the crueltie of this mad man was restrained and bridleed by the secret power of God. For assuredly he wold neuer haue been content with one or two murders, and so haue abstained from persecuting the rest, but hee woulde rather haue pyled vp martyres vpon heapes, vnlesse God had set his hand against him, and defended his flocke. So when we see that the enemies of godlinesse being full of furie, doe not commit horrible slaughters, that they may mixe and imbrue all things with blood, let vs knowe that we neede not thank their moderation and clemencie for this, but because when the Lorde doth spare his sheep, he doth not suffer them to do so much hurt as they woulde. This Herod was not so courteous, that he would sticke to winne peace or the peoples fauour with the punishent of an hundred men or more.

Wherefore we must thinke with our selues that hee was tyed by one that had the rule ouer him, that hee might not more vehementlye oppresse the Church. Hee slue Iames, as, when any sedition is raised, the heads and captaines goe first to the pot, that the common raffe may by their punishment be terrified. Neuertheless the Lord suffered him whom he had furnished with constancie to bee put to death, that by death he might get the victorie as a strong and inuincible champion. So that the attempts of Tyrants notwithstanding, God maketh choyce of sweete smelling sacrifices to establish the faith of his gospel. Luke calleth this Iames which was slaine the brother of Iohn, that hee may distinguish him from the sonne of Alphæus. For whereas some make him a thirde cosin of Christes, who was only some one of the disciples, I doe not like of that: because I am by strong reasons perswaded to think

that

that there were no more. Let him that will, repaire to the second to the Galathians. Therefore I thinke that the Apostle and the sonne of Alpha were al one, whom the Iewes threw down headlong from the top of the temple, whose death was so highly commended for his singular prayse of holinesse.

3 *Seeing that it pleased the Iewes.* It appeareth more plainly by this that Herod was not moued either with any zeale that he had to Moses lawe, or with any hatred of the Gospell, thus to persecute the Church, but that he might prouide for his owne priuate affayres. For hee proceedeth in his crueltie, that hee may winne the peoples fauour. Therefore wee muste knowe that there bee diuers causes, for whiche the Church is assaulted on euery side. Oftentimes peruers zeale driueth the wicked headlong, to fight for their superstitions, and that they may sacrifice an offering to their idols by sheeding innocent blood: but the more parte is moued with priuate commodities onely. So in times past, at such time as Nero knewe after the burning of the citie, that hee was lothed and hated of the people, hee sought by this subtil meanes to get into fauour againe, or at least he went about to stay their slaunders and complaintes, by putting certaine thousandes of the godly to death.

In like sort, that Herod may winne the peoples fauour, who did loue him but a litte, hee putteth the Christians to death as a price where-with hee might redeeme their fauour: and such is our estate at this day: for though all men runne by troupes vpon the members of Christe, yet fewe are poked forward with superstition: but some sell them selues to Antichriste like profitable bond slaues: othersome beare with, and commend the outragious outcries of Monkes and the common people: but wee in the meane season, beeyng abiectes must bee glad to beare their mockes: yet there is one comfort which doeth excellently keepe vs on foote, in that wee knowe that our blood is precious in the sight of Almighty GOD, which the worlde doth shamefullye abuse: yea the more shamefullie and reprochfullie the wicked doe handle vs, so much the lesse shall Gods goodnesse forsake vs.

4 *Adding foure quaternions of souldiars.* Luke doth in this place declare by circumstances, that Peter was as it were shut vp in his graue, so that it might seem that hee was quite past hope. For as they diuided the day and night into foure partes by three houres: so Herod diuided the watches, that foure souldiars might alwayes keepe watche, and that one quaternion might succcede another euery third houre. He sheweth the cause why hee was not forthwith put to death, because it had been an haynous offence to put him to death in the Easter holidayes. Therefore Herod doeth not delay the time as doubtfull what to doe: but doth only waite for opportunitie. Yea hee maketh choice of a time, when as his giste may bee more plausible, because there came a great multitude together from all partes vnto the holy day.

5 *But prayers were made.* Luke teacheth here that the faithfull did not in the meane season foreflowe their dutie, Peter stode in the forward alone, but all the rest fought with their prayers together with him, and they ayded him so much as they were able. Heereby we doe also gather that they were not discouraged: for by praier they testifie that they persist so much as they are able in defence of the cause, for which Peter is in danger of life. This place teacheth, first, how we ought to be affected when we see our brethren persecuted by the wicked, for the testimonie of the gospel. For if wee bee slothfull, and if we be not inwardly touched with their daungers, we doe not only defraude them of the due dutie of loue, but also treacherously forsake the confession of our faith: and assuredly, if the cause be common, yea if they fight for our sautie and salvation, we do not only forsake them, but euen Christ and our selues: and the present necessitie requireth, that they be faire more feruent in praier, then commonly they are, whosoener will bee counted christians. We see some of our brethren (being brought to extreeme pouertie) liue in exile, others we see imprisoned, many cast into stinking dungeons, manie consumed with fire, yea we see newe torments oftentimes inuented, whereby being long tormented, they may feele death. Vnlesse these prouocations sharpen our desire to pray, we be more then blockish. Therefore so sone as any persecution ariseth let vs by and by get our selues to prayer.

Also it is a likely thing that the church tooke greater thought for Peters life, because they shoulde haue suffered great losse if hee had gone. Neither doth Luke say barely, that *prayer was made*: but he addeth also, that it was earnest and continual Whereby he giueth vs to vnderstand that the faithfull prayed not coldly or ouer fields, but so long as Peter was in the confict, the faithfull did what they coulde to helpe him, and that without wearisomnesse. We must alwayes vnderstande the name of God, which is here expressed, whensoever mention is made of prayer in the scripture. For this is one of the chiefest and first principles of faith, that we ought to direct our prayers vnto God alone: as he challengeth to himselfe this peculiar worship, Call vppon mee in the day of tribulation.

Psal. 50. 15.

- 6 *And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night slept Peter betwene two soldiers bound with two chaines. And the keepers kept the prison before the dore.*
- 7 *And behold the Angel of the Lord stood, and a light shined in the habitation. And he smoot Peters side, saying: Arise streightway: and his chaines fel from his hands.*
- 8 *And the Angell saide to him: Gyrde thy selfe, and binde on thy sandales. And hee did so. Then he saith so him: Put thy garment about thee, and follow mee.*
- 9 *And going out, he folowed him, neither vnderstood he that that was true which was done by the angell, but he thought that he saw a vision.*
- 10 *And when they were past the first watche, and the seconde, they came to the*

iron gate, which leadeth into the Citie, which opened to them of it owne accord. And when they were come out, they passed through one streete, and by and by the Angel departed from him.

- 11 Then Peter reasoning to himselfe, saide: Nowe of a truth I knowe, that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath deliuered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the waiting of the people of the Iewes.

6 When he was about to bring him forth. It seemeth at the first blush that the Church praieeth to small purpose: for the day was now appointed wherein Peter should be put to death, and he is within one night of death, and yet the faithfull cease not to pray, because they knowe that when the Lord doeth purpose to deliuer his, hee taketh his time oftentimes in the last and farthest point of necessitie, and that he hath in his hande diuerse wayes to deliuer. Secondly we may thinke that they did not so much pray for Peters life, as that the Lord would arme him with inuincible fortitude, for the glory of the Gospel: and that God would set the gospel of his son, open to the reproches and flanders of the wicked.

That night he slept. Al these circumstances do more set forth the wonderfull power of God, for who would not haue thought that Peter was already swallowed vp of death? for though he drew breath as yet, yet had he no chinch to creepe out at, for as much as he was beset with many deathes. Therefore whereas he escapeth from amidst deathes, whereas hee goeth safely among the handes of his hangmen, whereas the chaines are molten and are loosed, whereas the yron gate openeth it selfe to him: hereby it appeareth that it was a meere diuine kinde of deliuerance, and it was profitable for Peter to bee thus taught by these signes, that he might with more assurance forthwith declare vnto men the grace of God thus knowne. Againe it appeareth by this strait keeping, that Herod meant nothing lesse than to let Peter goe away aliue,

7 A light shined. It is to be thought that Peter alone sawe this light: and that the soldiars did either sleepe so soundly, or else were so amased, that they neither felt nor perceiued any thing. And there might be two causes why god would haue the light to shine: either that Peter might haue the vse thereof, and that the darkenesse might be no hindrance to him: or that it might be to him a signe and token of the heauenly glorie. For we reade oftentimes, that the Angels appeared with glistering brightnesse, euen when the Sun did shine. Assuredly Peter might haue gathered by the strange light that God was present: and also hee ought to haue made his profite thereof. When as the Angell smiteth Peters side, it appeereth hereby what a care God hath for his, who watcheth ouer them when they sleepe, and raiseth them when they are drouisie. And surely there were nothing more miserable than wee, if the continuance of our prayers alone, did keepe God in his watching ouer vs. For such is the infirmitie of our flesh that wee faint & quaille, & we stand most of all in neede of his helpe, when our mindes being drawne away, do not seeke him. Sleepe is a certaine image of death, and doth chocke
and

and drowne all the senses, what should become of vs, if God should then cease to haue respect to vs? But forasmuch as when the faithfull goe to sleepe, they commit their safetie to God, it commeth to passe by this meanes, that euen their sleepe doth call vpon God. Whereas he saith that immediatly after the Angel had said the word, the chaines were loosed: we gather by this, that there is power ynough in the commandement of God alone to remoue al maner lets, when all waies seeme to be stopt on al sides: so that if he intend to appease the motions and tumults of war, although the whole world were appointed in armor, their spears and swords shall forthwith fall out of their hands: on the other side, if he be determined to punish vs and our sinnes with war, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, their minds which were before giuen to peace, shall wax hot, and they shall lay hand on their swords. Whereas Luke setteth downe seuerally, both the words of the Angel, and also the course of the matter, it serueth for the more certaintie of the historie, that it may in euery respect appeare that Peter was deliuered by God.

9 *He knew not that it was true.* He did not think that it was a vaine or false vision, as Satan doth oftentimes dilude men with iuglings: but *true* is taken in this place for that which is done naturally and after the manner of men. For we must note the contrarietie that is betwene the thing it selfe and the vision. Furthermore though he thinke that it is a vision, yet doth he willingly obey: whereby his obedience is prooued: whiles that being content with the commandement of the angel alone, he doth not inquire nor reason what he must do, but doth that which he is commanded to do.

10 *When they were past.* God was able to haue carried Peter away in the turning of an hand: but he ouercommeth diuerse straits one after another, that the glory of the miracle might be the greater. So he created the world in sixe dayes, not because he had any need of space of time, but that he might the better stay vs in the meditating vpon his works: for he applieth the manner of doing vnto our capacity, and vnto the increase of faith. If Peter had at a sodain ben carried vnto the house where the brethren were assembled, then should one onely deliuerance haue ben acknowledged, but now we see as it were with our eyes that he was deliuered more than ten times.

11 *Then Peter returning to himselfe.* It is word for word, Being made in himselfe, because being before astonied with a strange and vncredible thing, he was as it were without himselfe. But now at length as it were after a trance, he knoweth that he is deliuered from death. His words set downe by Luke containe a thanksgiuing. For he extolleth with himselfe the benefit of God which he had tried, and whereof he had tasted, and he doth highly commend it with himselfe, vntil he find some other witnesses. He saith that the Angel was sent of God, according to the common meaning of the godly, who hold that the Angels are appointed to be ministers, to be careful for, and to take charge of their safetie. For vnlesse he had bin thus perswaded, he would not haue spoken of the Angel. And yet he doth not commend the Angel as the autor of the grace: but

Genes. 1.

Exod. 20. 11

but he ascribeth al the whole praise of the worke to God alone Neither do the angels help vs to this end, that they may deriue vnto themselves euen the least iot of gods glory. Whereas he saith that he was deliuered out of the hand of Herod, he amplifieth the goodnes and benefit of god, by the power of his enemy. To the same end tendeth that which he addeth of the Iewes. For the greater the number of the enemies was, the more excellent was the grace of God toward his seruant: for it is a great matter that God alone being fauorable, the deadly hatred of al the whol world should come to nought.

12 And considering he came into the house of Mary the mother of Iohn, whose surname was Marke, where many were gathered and praying.

13 And when Peter had knocked at the entry doore, a maid came out to harken, named Rhode.

14 And when she knew Peters voice, she opened not the doore for ioy: but running in, she told that Peter stood without.

15 But they said to her, Thou art mad. But she affirmed more vehemently that it was so. But they said it is his Angel.

16 But Peter continued knocking. When they had opened they saw him, and they were astonied.

17 But after that he had beckned to them with the hand, that they should hold their peace, he told them how God had brought him out of prison. And he said: Tell Iames and the brethren these things. And he departed thence, and went into an other place.

18 After that it was day, there was no small adoe amongst the soldiars, what was become of Peter,

19 And when Herod had sought him, and could not finde him, so soone as he knew the matter, he commanded the keepers to be carried away.

12 Into the house of Mary. It appeareth that shee was a matron of rare godlinesse, whose house was as it were a certaine temple of God, where the brethren did vse to meet together. And Luke saith, that there were Many assembled there, because seeing they could not all meet together in one place without feare of some tumult, they came together in diuerse places of the citie in companies, as they could conueniently. For doubtlesse there were other companies gathered together elsewhere: because it is not to be thought that (at such time as many of the faithful did giue themselves to praier) the Apostles were not in like sort occupied, & one house could not hold so many. And we must alwayes marke the circumstance of time, because euē in the heat of the enemies cruelty, the godly were notwithstanding assembled together. For if at any time this exercise be profitable, then is it most necessary, when hard conflicts approach.

15 When he did knocke at the gate. Whereas they thinke that the maide is madde, which telleth them that Peter was come: we gather by this, that they did not hope or looke for Peters deliuerance, and yet wee will not say that they prayed without faith: because they looked for some other successe, to witte, that Peter being armed with power from heauen, should be readie whether it were by life or death

death to glorifie God, that the flocke being terrified with the violent inuasion of woolues might not be scattered abroad, that those that were weake might not faint, that the Lord would put away that whirlewinde of persecution. But in that the Lorde graunteth them more than they hoped for, he surpasseth their desires with his infinit goodnes. And now that which was done seemeth to them incredible, that they may bee the more prouoked to praise his power.

It is his Angell. They call him his Angel, who was by God appointed to bee his keeper and the minister of his safetie. In which sense Christ saith that the Angels of little ones do alwayes see the face of his father. And what do they gather hence commonly? That euery particular man hath a particular Angel, which taketh charge of him: but it is too weak.

Matth. 18. 10. For the scripture doeth sometimes testifie that there is one Angel giuen to a great people, and to one man onely a great hoast. For Elizeus

Exod. 14. 10. his seruant had his eies opened so that hee sawe in the aire charriots of

2. Kings. 6. 17. fire, which were appointed to defend the prophet. And in Daniel there

Dan. 10. 5. is but one Angel of the Persians, and one of the Grecians named. Nei-

12. ther doeth the Scripture promise to euery man a certaine and peculiar

Psal. 91. 11. Angel, but rather that the Lorde hath charged his Angels to keepe all

Psal. 34. 8. the faithfull: also that they pitch their tents about the godly. Therefore

8. that vaine surmise which is common touching the two Angels of euerie man, is prophane. Let this bee sufficient for vs, that the whole hoast of heauen doth watch for the safetie of the Church: and that as necessity of time requireth, sometimes one Angel, sometimes moe doe defende vs with their aide. Assuredly this is vnestimable goodnes of God, in that he saith that the Angels who are the beames of his brightnesse, are our ministers.

17 *Tel Iames and the Brethren.* By Brethren I vnderstand not euery one that was of the Church, but the Apostles and elders. For though it were requisite that the myracle should be made knowne to all, yet will Peter worthily for honors sake haue his fellowes in office to be certified thereof. Ecclesiastical writers after Eusebius, report, that this *Iames* was one of the disciples: but forasmuch as *Paul* reckoneth him in the number of the three pillars of the Church, I doe not thinke that a disciple was aduanced to that dignitie, and the Apostles set aside. Wherefore I doe rather coniecture that this was *Iames* the son of *Alphee*, whose holinesse was such that it caused the Iewes to wonder at it. And there be two reasons for which *Peter* would haue this ioyfull message brought vnto the brethren: to wit, that he might ridde them of that care which did vex them: secondly that they might be encouraged with such an example of Gods goodnesse to be the more bold. Whereas he passeth into another place, I thinke it was done for this cause, because forasmuch as the house was well knowne and famous, because many of the brethren resorted thither, hee might lye hidde elsewhere with lesse daunger. Therefore hee sought a place which was not so much suspected of the enimie, and that, that hee might not onely saue himselfe, but also his hostis and others.

18 *When it was day.* Luke returneth nowe vnto Herod and the soldiars: and he saith that there was no small adoe amongst them. For they could not suspect that Peter was taken from them by violence, or that he was escaped by some subtil shift. Herod examineth the matter afterward as a iudge: but when as he perceiued that the soldiars were in no fault, he himselfe is also inforced to be a witnesse of the deliuerance wrought by God. Whereas he commandeth them to be carried out of his sight, or to be carried to prison, we may thereby gather, that their faithfulness and diligence were approued and scene: for if there had beene any suspicion of negligence, there was punishment prepared for them: but the cause why he doeth not let them go free, was partly ragemixed with tyrannous crueltie, and partly shamefastnesse. Though some expound it otherwise, that he commanded that they should be punished forthwith. And whether being angrie he deliuered them to the hangman, or he was content to punish them with perpetuall imprisonment: it is assuredly an excellent example of blindness, that whereas he ought to perceiue the power of God, yea though his eyes were shut, yet doth he not bend, neither doth he waxe more meeke, but proceedeth to resist God of obstinate malice: thus doth Satan deprive the wicked of vnderstanding, that in seing they see not: and the Lord by smiting them with this horrible amasednesse doeth iustly reuenge himselfe and his Church.

And descending from Iudea to Caesarea, he staid there.

20 *And Herod was offended with those of Tyre and Sidon. But they came vnto him with one consent: and perswading Blasius, the chamberlaine to the King, they required peace, because their countrie was nourished by the Kings commerie.*

21 *And vpon a day appointed, Herod arrayed himselfe in royall apparel, and sitting vpon his throne, he made an oration vnto them.*

22 *And the people cried, it is the voice of God and not of man.*

23 *And straightway the Angel of the Lord smote him because he gaue not the glorie to God: and being eaten of wormes, he died.*

24 *Furthermore the word of God did encrease and multiply.*

25 *And Barnabas and Paul returned from Ierusalem to Antioch, hauing finished their office, taking Iohn with them, which was called Marke.*

20 A worthy historic which doth not onely shew as it were in a glasse: what end is prepared for the enemies of the Church, but also how greatly God hateth pride. The scripture saith that God resisteth the proud. God himselfe did shew a liuely image thereof in the person of Herod. 1. Pet. 5. 5. And assuredly men cannot extoll themselues higher than becommeth them, but they shall make warre with God: who, to the end he may surpass all, commaundeth all flesh to keepe silence. And if God did so sharply punish pride in a king, whom prosperitie did puffe vp, what shall become of those of the commū sort, who are ridiculously puffed vp without cause? Furthermore we must note the course of the historic, that all things

things go wel with Herod after that he had miserably vexed the church, he enforced the nations round about him being tamed with hunger, to come to craue pardon vpon their knees: as if God had rewarded him well for his wicked furie. This was no smal trial for the godly, who might haue thought thus with themselues, that God cared not for them: and they were afraid least with Herods power his tyranny & crueltie should encrease. But the Lord had another purpose, for he set the oppressor of his Church on high, that he might haue the greater fall. Therefore that shadowish felicitie, wherein he delighted too much, was vnto him a certaine fating against the day of slaughter. In like sort when at this day we see the bloody enemies of the Church carried vp vpon the wings of fortune into heauen, there is no cause why we should be discouraged, but let vs rather cal to minde that saying of Salomon, Pride goeth before calamitie, and the heart is lifted vp before a fall.

Pro. 16. 18.
& 12.

Herod was displeased. Luke vseth the compound participle *Thumomachon*, which signifieth priuie grudging or hatred. Therefore Herod did not make open war against those cities, but such was his displeasure, that he assaied to subdue them by pollicie, as it were by vnderminding them by litle and litle. It is a rare matter saith Demosthenes, for free cities to agree with Monarches. Moreouer Herod was naturally cruel, bold, of vnfatiable couetousnesse: and it is not to be doubted but that Tyrus and Sidon were as it were certaine barres or railes to stay his furie, as they were welthy cities & vnaccustomed to beare the yoke. Also the remembrance of their old glory might haue encouraged them: forasmuch as pride commeth commonly of wealth: it is no maruell if these two cities were proud: the one whereof Isaias calleth Queene of the seas, whose marchants he said were kings: and her chapmen Dukes. Also he saith elsewhere that Sidon was become proud by reason of her wealth. And although they had sundrie times bin brought almost to vtter ruine: yet the commodiousnes of their situation, did shortly restore them to their wonted state. Hereby it came to passe that they could more hardly digest Agrippa of late a base fellow, a man of no estimation, & one who had bin let out of prison, especially seing that he behaued himselfe so cruelly toward his own subiects, & was troublesome and iniurious to his neighbors.

Isai. 23. 8.
Iob. 12.

Forasmuch as their countrie was nourished. It had not bin good for him to haue assailed the men of Tyre and Sidon with open warre, therefore he giueth commandement that there should no corne nor victuall be carried out of his realme. By this meanes did he without any army besiege them by litle and litle. For the borders of both cities were strait, and their ground barren, whereas there was a great people to be fed. Therefore after that they were tamed with hunger, they humble craue peace, and that not free, for assuredly they had some lawes giuen them: and it is to be thought that this Blasius mentioned by Luke, was not with bare words perswaded but with rewards woone to intreat the peace. I know not why Erasmus did thinke it good to translate this place otherwise than the words import.

21 *Vpon an appointed day.* Luke saith that the men of Tyrus and Sidon had

had peace granted them, because this was the occasion of the kings oration, without doubt, that he might make them his vnderlings hereafter. The same history is extant in Iosephus in his nineteenth booke of Antiquities: saue only that he calleth him euery where Agrippa, whom Luke calleth Herod. It is to be thought that Agrippa was his proper name, & that he was called by none other name so long as he was a priuate man: but after that he was aduanced to be a king, he tooke to himself princely dignitie according to the name of his grandfather. Iosephus & Luke agree together wonderfully in the thing it self, and in all circumstances. First they agree concerning the place. Iosephus saith that his garment was imbroidered with gold, on which when the sunne beames light, it did glister again: & that this was the cause which moued the courtours to call him a God: that he was sodainly wounded: also that there was seene an Owle, sitting vppon a cord ouer his head, which cord did prognosticate his ruine. And he is so far from doubting that his sacrilegious pride was punished with this kind of punishment, that he saith that he confessed the same openly amidst his cruel torments, Behold me whom you call a God, I am enforced to finish my life most miserablie. There is no mention made there of the peace made with those of Tyrus & Sidon: but that he made and set forth plaies in honour of Cesar. But it may be that the solemnitie of the plaies was appointed in respect of the peace concluded: which we know was a solempne thing.

23 *Forthwith he smote him.* As before the Angel was a minister of gods grace in the deliuey of Peter, so now he taketh vengeance vpon Herod. And God doth sometimes vse the ministry of Angels in heauen in punishing: but somtimes he maketh the diuels as hangmen, by whose hand he executeth his iudgements. And this doth he as wel toward his faithful seruants, as toward the reprobate. Saul was troubled and vexed by satan, but the same did also befall holy Iob. In the Psalm the punishments wherewith God doth chasten the wicked, are attributed to the euil Angels: yet we see how the Angel which had the gouernment of the safetie of the Church, smiteth the Egyptians in the first begotten: although the scripture calleth the wicked spirits Gods spirits, because they are obedient to his commandemēt though ful sore against their wil. But wher the epithite Euil, is not added as in this place, we must vnderstand the angel which doth willingly obey God, and yet the shape of the Owle, whereof Iosephus maketh mention, did rather serue to figure the diuel, than an heavenly Angel. Furthermore, I dare not affirme for a suretie what manner disease that was. The word which Luke vseth doth signifie, that he was eaten vp of wormes. Many coniect that it was a lousie disease. This is certaine, that euen when he was yet aliue he was corrupt with stinke & rottennes, so that he was as it were a liuing carcase. So that he was not onely vexed with cruel torments, but also made a laughing stocke to all men, & of al men reuiled. For God intended to make choise of a kind of punishment, wherewith he might oppres the cruelty of a proud man with extrem ignominy. If he had bin ouercom of som great & valiant army, & had bin brought to pouerty, the iudgment of god had not bin so marked: and

1. Sam. 15.

14.

Iob. 1. 11.

& 2.

7.

Exo. 12. 29

Exo. 8. 17. 24. and this had bin an honest and princely chastisement : but forasmuch as he abhorreth lice and wormes, and this filthines commeth out of his body, which doth kill him by eating him vp, he is handled according to his deserts. In like sort Pharaο, forasmuch as he did so oft exalt himself against God with vntamed pride, he was not orderly assailed by some prince that did border vpon him, but Locusts and caterpillars were gods warriars to make warre against him, for the more proudly a man exalteth himself: the more doth he deserue to be cast downe of God into the lowest hell with shame and reproch. This is the reason why he set this feigned God Herod, to be eaten vp of wormes : which he was at length enforced to grant, when he said, Behold me whom ye saluted as a God, I die myserable. Such a manifest example of horrible vengeance in a kings person, ought to terrifie vs not a little, from presuming to take to our selues more than we ought : and that we doe not suffer our selues to be made drunke with the false commendation and flattery of men as with deadly poison.

Isai. 14 13. 14. *Because he gaue not the glorie to God.* He is condemned of sacrilege not only because he suffered himself to be called god, but because forgetting himselfe, he tooke to himselfe the honor due to God. We do not reade that the king of Babilon was thus extolled : and yet the Prophet vpbrai- deth to him that he went about to make himselfe equal with God. There- fore this sacrilege is a common fault in all proud men, because by taking to themselves more than they ought, they darken the glory of God: and so like gyants, so much as euer they are able, they indeuor to pluck God out of his seat. Howsoeuer they do not vsurpe the title of God, neither openly boast with their mouth that they are gods, yet because they take to themselves that which is proper to God, they desire to be and to be accounted gods, hauing brought him vnder. Furthermōre the Prophet pointeth out the beginning of this euill in one word, when he bringeth in Nabucadonezer speaking on this wise, I will go vp. Wherefore there is but one remedie, if euery one keepe himselfe in that degree wherein he is placed. Let those who are base and castawayes not desire to climbe higher : let kings and those who are aboue others, remember that they are mortall, and let them modestly submit their highnes to God. And we must note that it is not ynough if men giue to God onely halfe the honor which is due to him, who chalengeth all that wholly which is his owne : if they submit themselves but in part, whom he will haue to be thoroughly humbled. Now forasmuch as the Scripture dispoileth vs quite of all praise of wisdome, vertue, and righteousnes, there is no one of vs that can take to himselfe the least iot of glory, without sacrilegious rob- bing of God. And it is a wonder, that seing the Scripture pronounceth that all those make as it were open war against God, which exalt them- selves, and we do all grant, that that cannot be done without our over- throw : the greatest part of men runneth notwithstanding headlong with furious boldnesse vnto their owne destruction. For there is scarce one of an hundred who being mindfull of his condition, doth leaue to God his glory vndiminished.

24 And the word of God. When the tyrant was once taken out of the way, the Church was sodainly deliuered as it were out of the iawes of the wolfe. Therefore though the faithfull be accounted as sheepe appointed to be slaine, yet the Church doth alwayes ouerliue her enimies: and though the word of God seeme oftentimes to be oppressed with the wicked tyranny of men: yet it getteth vp the head againe by and by. For Luke determined not only to report what hapned after that Herod was dead, but also by this example to encourage vs, that we may be assured, that God will do that in all ages, which he then did, to the end the gospel may at length breake through all impediments of the enimies, and that the more the church is minished, it may the more encrease through the heauenly blessing.

Psa. 44. 23.

Rom. 8. 36

25 And Barnabas and Paul. The ministerie which Luke saith Barnabas and Paul did finish, must be referred vnto the almes, whereof mention was made before. For after that Agabus the Prophet had foretold the famine and barrennesse, the brethren gathered money at Antioch, whereby they might relieue the necessitie of the Church which was at Ierusalem, the carrying of this mony was committed to Barnabas and Paul. Now Luke saith that they returned to Antioch, that he may passe ouer vnto a new historie. He addeth that they tooke with them Iohn whose syrname was Marke, whose mother was honorable commended before, that he might keepe them company, who was after ward as we shal see, a cause of griuous and dangerous discord betweene them.

CHAP. XIII.

- 1 **A**ND there were in the Church which was at Antioch, certaine Prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyren and Manaim, who had bin brought vp with Herod, and Saul.
- 2 And as they ministered vnto the Lord, and fasted, the holy Ghost said: Separate to me Barnabas and Saul vnto the worke whereso I haue called them.
- 3 Then after they had fasted, and praied, and laid the hands vpon them, they let them goe.

1 Here followeth an historie not onely worthy to be remembred, but also very profitable to be knowne, how Paul was appointed the teacher of the Gentiles, for his calling was as it were a key, whereby God opened to vs the kingdome of heauen. We know that the couenant of eternall life was properly concluded with the Iewes, so that we had nothing to do with Gods inheritance, forasmuch as we were strangers: and the wall of seperation was put betweene, which did distinguish those of the household from strangers. Therefore it had profited vs nothing, that Christ brought saluation vnto the world, vnlesse the disagreement being taken away, there had bin some entrance made for vs into the Church. The Apostles had already receiued commandement, touching the preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole world, but they had kept themselves vntil this time within the borders of Iudea. When

Ephc. 2. 12

Mar. 16. 13

Peter was sent to Cornelius, it was a thing so new and strange, that it was almost counted a monster: secondly that might seeme to be a priuiledge granted to a few men extraordinarily: but now forasmuch as God doth plainly and openly appoint Paul and Barnabas to be Apostles of the Gentiles, by this meanes he maketh them equall with the Iewes: that the Gospel may begin to be common as wel to the one as to the other. And now the wal of seperation is taken away, that both those who were farre off and those which were nigh hand may be reconciled to God: and that being gathered vnder one head, they may grow together to be one bodie. Therefore Paul his calling ought to be of no lesse weight amongst vs, than if God should crie from heauen in the hearing of all men, That, the saluation promised in times past to Abraham and to the seede of Abraham, doth no lesse appertaine vnto vs at this day, than if we had come out of the loynes of Abraham. For this cause is it that Paul laboureth so much in defense and auouching of his calling: that the Gentiles may assuredly perswade themselves, that the doctrine of the gospel was not brought to them by chance, neither by mans rashnesse, but first by the wonderfull counsell of God, secondly by expresse commandement, whiles that he made that knowne to men which he had decreed with himselfe.

Genes. 22.
17.

Gala. 15. &
2.8.

Ephes. 4. 11

1. Cor. 12.
28.

1. Cor. 14.

27.

There were in the Church. I haue declared in the fourth to the Ephesi-
ans, and in the twelue of the former to the Corinthians, what difference there is (at least in my iudgement) betweene Doctors and Prophets. It may be that they are in this place Synonyma, or that they signifie both one thing, so that this is Lukes meaning, that there were manie men in that Church endewed with singular grace of the Spirit, to teach. Surely I cannot see how it can hange together to vnderstand by Prophets, those which were endewed with the gift of foretelling things: but I thinke rather that it signifieth excellent interpreters of scripture. And such had the office to teach & exhort, as Paul doth testifie in the fourteenth of the former to the Corinthians. We must mark Luke his drift: Paul and Barnabas were ministers of the church of Antioch, God calleth them thence now vnto another place. Least any man shuld think that, that Church was destitute of good & fit ministers, so that God did prouide for other Churches with the losse of it: Luke preuenteth this, & saith, that there was such store there, that though it did helpe others, yet did there remaine sufficient for the vse thereof: whereby appeareth how plentifully God had powred out his grace vpon the church, whence riuers as it were might be deducted & caried into diuers places. So euen in our time, God doeth so enrich certaine Churches more than other, that they be seminaries to spread abroad the doctrine of the Gospel. It must needs be that Manaim who was brought vp with Herod, came of some noble family. And this doeth Luke recite of purpose, that he may set forth to vs his godlines, who despising worldly pompe, had coupled himself to the simple & despyed flock of Christ. He might in deed haue bin a principall courteour, if he had bin ruled by ambition: but that he may wholly addiect himselfe to Christ, he refuseth not to change those
smokes.

smokes of honor with reproch and ignominy. For if we consider in what state the church stood then, he could not giue his name to the Gospel, vnlesse he should make himself subiect to common infamy. Therefore the Lord meant to teach vs by his example to despise the world, that those may learne with a valiant and lofty mind to despise the world, who cannot otherwise be true christians, vnles they cast away those things which are precious to the flesh, as hurtfull lets and hindrances.

2 And they ministered to the Lord. The word which Luke vseth doth not onely signifie to be occupied about holy things, but also some times to beare publike offices. And because the holy rites of the Gentiles did for the most part consist vpon burnt offerings and sacrifices: it is oftentimes takē for to offer sacrifice: which sense did wel like the Papists, that they might proue that the Apostles did vse some sacrifice. But admit it were so: yet do they foolishly pretend for defense of their Masse that the Teachers of Antioch did sacrifice. First forasmuch as the word is of the plurall number, it followeth that euery one of them did say Masse. But letting toies passe, I say we must consider, what maner of sacrifice Christ commended to his Church. The Papists feigne that the office of Priesthood is inioyned them, to sacrifice Christ, and by sacrificing him to redeeme peace with God. There is so little mention made hereof in scripture, that the sonne of god doth rather challenge this honor to himselfe alone. Wherefore Christs Church hath another Priesthood, to wit, that euery man may offer himselfe and his to God: and that the publike ministers may sacrifice to God, soules, with the spirituall sword of the Gospel, as Paul teacheth Rom. 15. 16. Moreouer the prayers of all the godly, are the spiritual calues of the lippes, wherewith God is well pleased, when they are offered vp vpon the holy Altar; that is in Christs name, in the thirteenth to the Hebrewes. Therefore when Luke saith that the Prophetes and teachers ministered to God when the Spirite spake to them: I vnderstand nothing else but that they were in the publike action. He addeth fasting, that we may know that their minds were then free from al impediments, that nothing might hinder them from giuing attendance to prophesying. But the question is whether they kept a common fast, or Luke doth onely signifie that they were fasting thē vntil that time. This is without question that these circumstances were expressed, that Paul his calling may cary the more credit amongst vs.

Seperate to me. God commandeth that Paul and Barnabas be sent, by the consent of the Church, thither whither he had appointed them to be sent. Whereby we gather that there is no lawfull election of Pastors, saue only wherein God is chiefe. For whereas he hath commanded that the Church should elect pastors & Bishops, he hath not therefore granted men so much libertie, but that he will beare the chiefeest sway as the chiefe gouernour. The ordinarie election of Pastours differeth from this appointing of Paul & Barnabas, because it was requisite that they shuld be appointed by the heauenly Oracle, to be the Apostles of the Gentiles: which is not necessaric to be done daily in ordaining Pastours. But they agree in this, that as God did testifie that Paul and Barnabas

Osec. 14. 3.
Hebru. 13.
15.

Galat. 1. 1.

Ephc. 2. 14.

were already appointed by his decree to preach the gospel: so none may be called vnto the office of teaching saue onely those whom God hath already chosen to himselfe after a sort. Furthermore there is no neede that the Spirite should cry to vs out of heauen, that he is called of God about whom we are, because we receiue those as it were from hand to hand (as they say) whom God hath furnished with necessarie gifts, forasmuch as they are framed and made fit by his hand. But whereas Luke saith in this place, that Paul was appointed by the voyces and consents of the Church: it doth seeme not to agree with Pauls own words, where he doth denie that he was called of men or by men. I answere that he was made an Apostle long before (and that by no voices of men) before such time as he was sent vnto the Gentiles: and he had now already executed the office of an Apostle many yeeres, when he was called to go to the Gentiles by a new oracle. Wherefore that he may haue God for the author of his apostleship, it is not without cause that he excludeth me. And he doth not now command that he be ordained by the church, therefore, that his calling may depend vpon men: but God publisheth that his decree which was as yet knowne to a few, and that with a publike commandement, and he commandeth that it be sealed with the solemne subscription of the Church. Therefore this is the meaning of the words, That this is the time, wherein Paul must preach the Gospel, among the Gentiles, and the wall being pulled downe, he must gather a Church of the Gentiles, who were before strangers from the kingdome of God. For although god had vsed him hitherto at Antioch & elsewhere; this was now added as a peculiar thing, that god did intend to adopt the Gentiles into the same inheritance of life with the Iewes. But and if he were thus created a teacher of the Church from the beginning, he should not then haue bin called at that time by men. For seing the Lord doth pronounce that he had called him, what doth he leaue for the Church, saue onely that they subscribe obediently? For mens iudgement is not here put in as in a doubtful matter, neither haue their voices & consents any freedome. But we must marke what I haue already said, that Paul & Barnabas are not now onely appointed teachers, but they haue an extraordinary office inioyned the, that they may begin to bring the grace of God commonly vnto the Gentiles. And that doe the words import when it is said, *Seperate to the work*. For vndoubtedly he speaketh of a new worke, & which had heretofore not bin vsed. But how is Barnabas in this place appointed to be Pauls companion and fellow in office, who as far as we can read, did neuer execute the office of teaching? yea who did alwayes giue Paul leaue to teach, without saying any thing himselfe? I answere that he had occasions ynough offered him to speake in Paul his absence, so that they had both of them ynough to do. For one could not alwayes be present in all places. It is not to be doubted but that he did faithfully discharge that duty which God had inioyned him, and that he was no dumbe looker on. And why should we wonder that Luke doth not set downe his sermons in plaine words, seing that he scarce repeateth one of a thousand, of Pauls?

The Spirit said. Whatsoever Macedonius and his sect object that they may turne their backs, yet we haue a more plaine and sound testimony of the diuine essence of the spirit in this place, than that they can escape it and make it frustrate. There is nothing more proper to god, than with his power and commandement to gouerne the Church alone. But the Spirit chalēgeth this right, when he commandeth that Paul & Barnabas be seperated to him, and testifieth that they were called by his beck. Assuredly we must needs confesse that the bodie of the Church is lame and without a head, vnlesse we confesse that it is God who ordereth the same at his pleasure, who setteth teachers ouer it, who gouerneth the proceedings and order thereof. We shall haue afterward Chapter 20. in Pauls sermon, that all Bishops are placed by the holy Ghost, which gouerne the Church. But no man is to be counted a lawfull Pastour of the Church; as the same Paul witnesseth, saue he which is called of God: Neither doth God point out false Prophets by any other marke, saue onely by this, that he hath not sent them. Therefore we gather that the holy Ghost is God in deede, whose authoritie is sufficient to choose Pastours, and who hath the chiefe rule in choosing them. Which is likewise confirmed out of the words of Esay: And now beholde the Lord hath sent me, and his Spirite. Furthermore we must note out of these words, that he is a person truely subsisting in God. For if we admit Sabellius his inuention, that the worde Spirite importeth no person; but that it is a bare adiunct, that shalbe a foolish and absurd speech, that the holy Ghost hath said: Isaias also should foolishly ascribe to him the sending of a Prophet.

Act. 20. 28.

Isai. 48.

3 *When they had fasted and praied.* That they may obey the Oracle, they do not onely send Paul and Barnabas away: but also with a solemn rite they appoint them to be the Apostles of the Gentiles. It is without question that this was a publike fast. Luke said before that they were fasting, forasmuch as they were busied in their ministerie: it might be that that was according to the custome, but now there is another reason. For in appointing a publike fast, which vsed to be done in hard matters and of great importance, they prouoke both themselues and others vnto an earnest seruente in prayer. For this is oftentimes added in Scripture as a helpe to praier. But (it was a matter of such weight to erect the kingdome of Christ amongst the Gentiles) the teachers of Antioch do not without cause earnestly pray the Lord, that he will inable his seruants. And that was not the end of their praier, that God would by his Spirit of wisdom & discretion, gouerne their iudgments in choosing: because al disputation or doubting concerning this matter was taken away: but that God would furnish those with the Spirit of wisdom and strength, whom he had alreadie chosen to himselfe: that he would strengthen them with his power against all the inuasions of Satan and the world: that he would blesse their labors, that they might not be vnfruitful: that he would open a gate for the new preaching of the gospel. The laying on of hands which Luke reckneth vp in the third place, was a kinde of consecration, as we haue said Chapter 6. For the Apostles

Acts. 6. 6.

retained the ceremonie which was vsed amongst the Iewes according to the old custome of the Law: as also kneeling & such rites, which were profitable to exercise godlinesse. In sum, this is the end why they laid their hands vpon Barnabas and Paul, that the church might offer them to God, and that they might with their consent declare that this office was inioyned them by God. For the calling was properly Gods alone: but the externall ordaining did belong to the Church, and that according to the heauenly Oracle.

- 4 *Therefore when they were sent forth by the holy Ghost, they went to Seleucia, and thence they sailed into Cyprus.*
- 5 *And when they were at Salamis they preached the word of God in the Synagogues of the Iewes. And they had Iohn also for their minister.*
- 6 *And when they had passed ouer the Iland vnto Paphos, they found a certaine false Prophet a Iew, named Bar-iesus.*
- 7 *Who was with Sergius Paulus the Proconsul, a wise man. When he had called Barnabas and Paul he sought to heare the word of God.*
- 8 *And Elimas the Sorcerer, for so is his name expounded, resisted them, seeking to turne away the Proconsull from the faith.*
- 9 *And Saul which was also called Paul, being full of the Ghost and looking stedfastly on him,*
- 10 *Said, O thou that art full of all deceit and wickednes, thou sonne of the diuel, thou enimie of all righteousness, dost thou not cease to peruert the streight waies of the Lord?*
- 11 *And now behold the hand of the Lord is vpon thee, and thou shalt be blinde, not seeing the sunne for a time: and forthwith there fell vppon him mist and darknesse and going about he sought some to lead him by the hand.*
- 12 *Then the Proconsull seeing what had happened, he beleeued, wondring at the doctrine of the Lord.*

4. *Being sent out by the holy Ghost.* There is no mention made heere of the Election made by the Church, because it was altogether a diuine calling: the Church did onely receiue those who were offered them by the hand of God. He saith that they came first to Seleucia, which was a Citie of Syria. There was indeede a countrie of the same name: but it is more likely that Luke speaketh of the Citie, which was not far from Cyprus by sea.

5. He saith that they beganne to preach the Gospel first in Salamis a famous Citie of Cyprus. Notwithstanding they seem to begin anisse: for whereas they were sent specially to the Gentiles, they preach the word of God neuerthelesse to the Iewes, I answere that they were not so addicted to the Gentiles, that setting aside the Iewes it stode them vppon to goe streight to the Gentiles. For when God did make them teachers of the Gentiles, he did not depose them from the office which they had heretofore exercised. So that there was no reason to let them, but that they might take paines both with Iewes and Gentiles: yea

farther it was meete that they shoulde beginne with the Iewes, as we shall see in the end of the Chapter. Moreouer Luke addeth by the way, that they were holpen by Iohn: for his meaning is not that hee was their minister for any priuat vse, or for the vses of bodie: but rather in that hee was their helper to preach the Gospel, hee commendeth his godly studie and industrie. Not that the degree of honour was equall, but because the labour was common to all: for which cause hee had the lesse excuse afterward, seing that he forsooke the holy calling.

6 *When they had passed ouer.* It is to be thought that this their passage was not altogether without fruit: and assuredly Luke would neuer haue passed ouer with silence a generall repulse, but it was sufficient for him to say, that they were not idle in the office of teaching, in their iorney, seeing that he maketh haste vnto a famous historie, which he will set downe immediatly. And forasmuch as Salamis situate vpon the East coast, did looke toward Siria, it was requisite that Paul and Barnabas should passe through the midst of the Iland vnto the other side, that they might come to Paphus. For Paphus was a Cittie situate vpon the Sea coast toward the South. Furthermore though all the Iland were dedicated to Venus, yet Paphus was the principall sea of the Idol. For which cause the goodnesse of God is more wonderfull in that he would haue the light of his Gospel to pearce into such a filthy and cruel den. For we may thereby gather what manner integritie, and chastity, and honestie, and temperance was in that Cittie, in that religion did grant libertie to the inhabitants to commit all manner shamefull and haynous offences.

They found a certaine false Prophet. Seing that religion was quite corrupt among the Iewes, it is no maruel if they fell away vnto many wicked superstitions. And for as much as they had hitherto professed that they worshipped a certain peculiar god, this was a fair colour to deceiue withall, seeing that they might pretend the name of the vnknowne God, at their pleasure: but this is a wonder how it was possible for Elymas with his iuggling to cosin a graue and wise man. For we know that the Iewes were at that time hated of all the world: and especiallie of the Romans, and with hatred was coupled extreame contempt of them.

Nowe Luke doth not without cause expressly commende Sergius his wisdom, least any man should thinke that his foolishnesse and lightnesse was subiect to the seducings of the Sorcerer. His meaning was in deede to shewe in a cleare myrrour, howe friuolous and vaine mans wisdom is, which cannot beware of such grosse subtilltie of Sathan. And assuredlie where the trueth of God doeth not appeare, the more men seem to be wise, the more filthylie foolish are they. Wee see what filthy monsters of superstitions did reigne amongst the most wittie Gentiles, and such as were furnished with all manner learning. Therefore there is neither iudgement nor wisdom saue onely from the Spirit of God. And this is the iust vengeance of God vpon all idolaters,

Rom. 1. 28.

that being deliuered vp to a reprobate sense they can discerne nothing. Though it may be that Sergius Paulus being wery of superstitions, did then begin to desire a more pure worship of god, at such time as he light vpon that forcerer. Which if we receiue, it was surely a wonderful iudgment of God, that he suffered a man godly affected to throw himselfe headlong into the snares of satan. But God doth sometimes so exercise his elect, that he causeth them to wander many waies, before they be directed into the right way.

7 And wheras Sergius Paulus desiring some better thing than that which he had learned from his childhood, was vnaptly drawne aside vnto diuerse superstitions, I gather heereby, that he sendeth for Paul and Barnabas of his owne accord, to teach him. Therefore he had conceiued a certain reuerence & feare of God, though he knew him not as yet, & forasmuch as he was perswaded that that was the true god which was worshiped in Iudea, he desired to know out of his word a pure and certaine rule of Godlinesse: so soone as he hath tasted of the dotings of the false prophet hee standeth in doubt. And it is not to be doubted but that God doth sollicit his minde, that he may not be altogether staid in vanitie, though he suffered himselfe to be disceiued for a time by a wicked man.

8 *To turne away the deputie from the faith.* No maruell if the seducer seeke to put away the light, whereby he saw his owne darknes driuen away. The same stoure haue we at this day with a number of brablers, who vsing to sell their smokes, and to shut by all shifts possible the eyes of the simple, that they may not behold the sunne of righteousness being now risen. We must wrestle with such lets: for as there be alwayes, and euery where magicians present, which procure vs some busines: Satan thrusteth in lets ynough which possesse our minds to driue away Christ: which the flesh is too ready to receiue. Finally both the inticements of the world and the wicked affections of our flesh, are as many charmes, whereby Satan ceaseth not to ouerthrow the faith.

9 *And Saul who was also called Paul.* Luke sheweth now how God brake the bond wherein the deputie was bound. For seeing that he was too much addicted to the magician, he could not embrace true doctrine as one that was free and at libertie: for the diuell keepeth those minds (which he hath intangled) in his slavery after a wonderfull and vncredible manner, that they cannot see euen the most plaine truth: but so soone as he was once vanquished, Paul could easily enter in vnto the deputie. And marke what Luke saith, that *the faith* is ouerthrowne, when the word of God is resisted. Whence we may gather, that Faith is so grounded in the word, that without this shoare it fainteth at euerie assault: yea that it is nothing else but the spirituall building of the word of God.

10 *O thou full of all deceit.* It was not without cause that Paul was thus hot and angrie, for he had no hope to do any good if he should deale after some moderate & milde sort. We must alwaies begin with doctrine, and those are also to be admonished, exhorted, and pricked forward, who

who do not as yet appear to be altogether obstinate. Neither doth Paul so vehemently inueigh against the forcerer, at the first dash: but when he seeth him maliciously and manifestly fight against the doctrine of godlinesse, he handleth him like a bondslaue of Satan. Thus must wee deale with the desperate enemies of the gospel, in whom appeareth open contumacie, and wicked contempt of God, especially when they stoppe the way before others. And least any man should thinke that Paul was out of measure angrie, Luke saith plainly, that the inspiration of the spirite was his guide. Wherefore this heat of zeale is not only not to be reprehended, but it ought to make the profane contemners of God sore afraid, who feare not to rebell against his worde: forasmuch as this iudgement is giuen vpon them all not by mortall man, but by the holy Ghost, by the mouth of Paul. As touching the wordes, this place refuteth their error, who thinke that Paul tooke his name of the deputie, as if hee had set vp some token of victorie. There may many reasons bee brought and those strong enough, on the contrarie: but this one place is sufficient, where Luke sheweth that at suche time as the deputie was not brought to the faith he had two names. And it is not to be doubted, but that he retained his owne name amongst the Iewes, and we know that this was an vsuall thing, that those who were citizens of Rome should borrow some Italian name. Luke ioyneth subtiltie with deceit which is contrarie to sinceritie: to wit, whiles craftie men transforme their wit hither and thither, so that they haue in them no simplicitie, though the Greeke worde which Luke vseth, signifieth readie boldnesse to doe hurt: but the former signification agreeth better. By *the sonne* of the Diuell, is meant a reprobate and desperate man. Such are all: those which resist maliciously and as it were of set purpose, that which is iust and right: therefore Paul addeth, that he is a great *emie* of all righteousness.

Doest thou not cease to peruers. He calleth all that meanes wherby the Lord bringeth vs vnto himselfe, the wayes of the Lorde. Hee testifieth that this is plaine and streight: and hee accuseth the forcerer, for making the same, crooked, full of turnings, and doubtfull, with his boughts and turnes. Whence may be gathered a profitable doctrine, that it cometh to passe through the subtiltie of Satan that wee doe not readilie with streight course goe vnto the Lord. For he sheweth vs in his worde a plaine way and such as is not thornie. Wherefore wee must take good heed of seducers, which trouble the way with their ditches or thornes, or els make the same hard and vnpleasaunt. And it shall bee conuenient to repeate here, that which I touched before, that the seruants of Christe must not be blamed if they doe sore inueigh against the professed enemies of sound doctrine: vnlesse we will accuse the holy Ghost of intemperancie. Neither am I ignorāt how easily men may fall in this point, for which cause godly teachers must take so much the more heed, first that they fauour not the affections of the flesh too much vnder the colour of zeale: secondly, that they breake not out with headlong and vnseasonable heat, where there is yet place for moderation: thirdly, that they giue not themselues ouer to foolish and vncomely railing: but only that
they

they expresse the vnseemlinesse of the thing by grauitie and weight of wordes. Such was the vehemencie of holy zeale and of the spirit in the prophets, which if daintie and soft men iudge troublesome and raging, they consider not how deare and precious Gods truth is to him. Nowe there riseth not one Elimas to subuert the faith, but manie, and those which are far more wicked. For we see with what sacrilegious boldnesse they despoyle God of al honour, with what filthie corruptions they profane all religion, how cruelly they throw miserable soules headlong into eternall destruction, how vnseemly they mocke Christ, how filthily they disfigure all the whole worship of God, with what cruell reproches they rét the holy truth of god, with what barbarous tyrāny they lay wast the church of God: so that you would say that they tread god vnder foot. And yet there be manie crabbed philosophers, who wold haue these furious Giants flattered and clawed by the back. But forasmuch as it doth euidently appeare that such did neuer tast what that meaneth, the zeal of thy house hath eaten me vp; let vs, bidding adue to their coldnesse or rather sluggishnesse, be most hoat as becommeth vs, in maintaining the glory of God.

Psal. 69. 10.

11 *Behold the hand.* The hand is put heere to punish: whereby hee doth signifie, that God is the authour of this punishment, and that hee is onely the minister. Furthermore I thinke that this habilitie is that which Paul calleth *dynamis* or power. For as they did excel in power of the Spirit to helpe the faithfull with myracles, so had they the whip in their hand to tame the rebellious and obstinate with all. Such vengeance of God did Peter shew vpon Ananias and Sapphyra. But because myracles ought for the most part to resemble the nature of Christ, who is all gentle, sweet, bountifull, and mercifull: therefore he would seldome haue the apostles to shew examples of the cōtrary power. Neither must we think that they wer indued with this power to punish any man so often as it seemed good in their own eies, but the same Spirit of god which did thus arm them, did direct them vnto the lawfull and right vse. Therefore we must remember that which we had before, that Paul spake by inspiration of the Spirit.

1. Cor. 12. 28.

Acts. 5. 1

Furthermore, it was a very fit kinde of punishment. For seeing that the sorcerer assayed to darkē the sunne, and to take from others the benefit of the light, he was by good right cast into horrible darknesse. But now forasmuch as many of the Papists doe farre exceed this sorcerer at this day in vngodlines, it is a wonder why they be suffered to be so bolde without being punished. Is the hand of God weakened? Is he lesse carefull for his glorie? Hath he no care to reuenge the Gospel? I answear, that this vile punishment, which was once laid vpon the sorcerer, and suche as this, are perpetuall examples of Gods wrath against all those who are not afraid either to corrupt and depraue, or openly with slaunders to resist the pure doctrine of the gospel. For wee doe knowe that myracles were wrought for a time to this end, that they may continual lie in force, and bee fresh before our eyes, and that they may giue vs light to behold the iudgements of God, which we cannot see so plainlie.

But

But it is not for vs to prescribe God this or that way to punish his enemies. Sergius Paulus, who before he came to mans estate had no taste of true religion: who from his childhood was infected with diuers superstitions, and had very hard lets, which kept him backe from imbracing the faith: lastly, who was bewitched with the dotings of the forcerer, that he could scarce com to the faith, had need of no smal helps: hereby it came to passe, that God did as it were reach his hand out of heauen manifestlie, though he helped vs all in his person. For the same gospel, the authoritie whereof was then established, is at this day preached to vs, and yet notwithstanding God doeth not so linger, but that hee sheweth his fearefull power diuers wayes against the enemies of the gospel: vnlesse our eyes were so dull when hee sheweth his iudgements, that wee cannot see.

12 *Then when the deputie saw.* This is that which I saide, that the snares were broken, wherein Elunas kept him intangled. For hee was brought by the myracle vnto faith: because the reuerence of doctrine is the beginning of faith, and the preparation. Therefore forasmuch as hee sawe an euident token of the power of God, he knew that Paul was sent of God, and so he began to reuerence his doctrine, wherof he did doubt before. If God doe now myraculously strengthen in the mindes of many the faith of the gospel, which is shaken with so many & suche strong engines: if he bring to passe after an incredible manner, that the course of faith doth passe through a thousande lets, beeing content with this his grace, let vs not murmure against him or reason the matter with him, as if our condition were worse, if hee doe not daily shewe such myracles as we would desire.

13 *And when Pauls companions had loosed from Paphus, they came to Perga of Pamphilia. And Iohn departing from them, returned to Ierusalem.*

14 *Furthermore, when they had passed ouer the countrie of Perga, they came to Antioch a citie of Pisidia, and entered into the Synagogue vpon the day of the Sabboth, and sate downe.*

85 *And after the lecture of the Lawe and Prophetes, the master of the Synagogue sent to them, saying: Men and brethren, if there be in you any worde of exhortation vnto the people, say on.*

13 Here is set downe another of Pauls stations. For being departed from Paphus, when he came to Antioch of Pisidia, he made there a worthie sermon, which Luke will recite together with the successe. But before he come to that, he doth by the way speake of the departure of Iohn, because it was afterwarde a cause of dolefull disagreement, when he saith, Pauls companions loosed from Paphus, he doeth in the first place meane Paul himselfe, secondly the other, one excepted. So that by noting his softnes, he praiseth others which followed Paul with great constancie.

14 *Entering vpon the day of the Sabboth.* Hee putteth the plurall number in steed of the singular, as it falleth out oftentimes in other places of scrip-

Scripture. For they were wont to assemble themselues together vppon the Saboths, least their rest should be vnprofitable and sluggish. The institution of the Sabbath had another end also, that it might bee a figure of the spirituall rest, when as the faithfull being dead to the worlde, and the flesh, abandon their owne will, and cease from their works. Because we haue the truth hereof in Christ, whiles that being buried together with him we put off the old man, therefore the old figure is past. But god had respect also vnto the politike vse, that the Iewes being free from all other cares and businesses might keepe their holy assemblies. So that the ceasing off from earthly workes, did giue a place to their heavenly exercises. So euen at this day we must vse holy dayes: for we must therefore omit all other thinges, that we may the more freely serue God.

15 *After the lecture of the lawe.* There is no mention made of prayers, and yet vndoubtedly they were not omitted or foreflowed: but because Luke did intend to set downe the sermon made there by Paul, no maruel if he reckon vp those thinges only, which did belong vnto the order of teaching. And this is a notable place, out of which we learne, after what sort they handled doctrine at that time among the Iewes. The Law and the Prophetes had the first place: because there must nothing be set before the church, which was not drawen out of that fountaine. Also we gather by this, that the scripture was not suppressed among a fewe, but that both one and other were admitted to the reading thereof, afterwarde, those who were able and had the grace to teach and exhort had the seconde place, as interpreters of the scripture which was read. Notwithstanding Luke sheweth last of all, that euery one was not suffered to speake, least confusion should arise by libertie: but the office of exhorring was committed to certaine men, whom hee calleth Rulers of the synagogue, or masters. Therefore Paul and Barnabas begin not forthwith to speake, least they disturbe the accustomed order with too much hast: but they doe modestly stay till they haue lybertie graunted them to speake, and that with their leaue who had authoritie by publike consent. We know how corrupt the state of that people was then, and Luke will at length declare in the end of the chapter, that these men of Antioch were too stout and stubborne in receiuing the grace of Christe: and yet there remained this goodnesse among them, that their assemblies were honestly and decently gouerned, for which cause such euill fauoured confusion is so much the more shamefull, which is seene at this day among those who will be counted Christians. The Papists doe in deede sing the scriptures in their churches with shrill and sounding voice, but in an vnknown tongue, so that the people reape no frute therby. There is seldome any doctrine vsed, and it were better for the wicked brablers euen then to hold their peace, who thrust in their own vncleane inuentions in steed of the word of God, and pollute with the stink of their impietie, whatsoeuer is holy.

If there be in you. This speech doth signifie that what grace soeuer is in men to edifie the church, it is as it were committed to them. Althogh the word *in*, according to the Hebrew phrase, may be superfluous. Therefore

fore I stand not greatly vpon that: because the sense may be plain, If you haue any exhortation, which is apt and profitable for the people. An exhortatio doth not exclude doctrine. But it seemeth that this worde was commonly vsed among them, bicause it is properly the office of the teacher to vtter no newe thing of his owne braine: but to apply the scripture, wherein is comprehended the whole wisdom of the godly, vnto the present vse of the people. Thus they doe not only teach, but also apply the doctrine which they haue els where vnto the edifying of the church, which I thinke is meant by the worde *exhortation*.

- 16 And Paul rose, and when he had giuen a token of silence with the hande, hee said: Men and brethren, which feare God, heare.
- 17 The God of this people did choose our fathers, and exalted the people, when they were strangers in the land of Egypt, and hee brought them thence with a high arme.
- 18 And about fortie yeeres hee suffered their maners in the wildernesse.
- 19 And hauing destroyed seuen nations in the land of Chanaan, he gaue them their land for an inheritance.
- 20 After these things, about foure hundred and fiftie yeeres, he gaue them iudgement vntill Samuel the prophet.
- 21 Afterward they required a king, and God gaue them Saul, the sonne of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for tie yeeres.
- 22 And when he had taken him away, he raised vp to them Dauid to bee king, of whom bearing witnesse, hee said: I haue found Dauid the sonne of Iesse, a man according to my heart, who shall doe all my will.
- 23 Of whose seed God according to promise raised to Israel the sauour Iesus.

16 Wee must first note the state of this sermon, least we think that he vttered words in vaine, Paul seemeth in deed to begin euē at the very first beginning, but he speaketh nothing but that which is most conuenient for the present purpose. His purpose is to bring the Iewes vnto the faith of Christ, and that he may the better doe this, it is needfull to declare, that they excel other natiōs in this one thing, because the sauour was promised them: whose kingdome is their principal and only felicitie. This is therefore Paul his beginning, that whereas they were chosen in times past to be the peculiar people of God: whereas they had so many benefites bestowed vpon them from time to time, though they shewed themselves most vnworthie, this did depend vpon the promise of the Messias, and did tend to that end, that God might gouerne them by the hand of the Messias: and that therefore they haue nothing whereof they may boast, vnlesse they be gathered vnder their head. Yea that vnlesse they receiue him when hee is offered, the couenant of life which God had made with their fathers shalbe void, and the adoption shall be frustrate. This is the drift of the first part of the sermon, that this is the principall point of the lawe and the foundation of Gods couenant, that they haue Christ for their captaine and gouernour, that he may restore all things among them: that without him religion cannot stande, and
that

that they shall bee most miserable without him. Thence Paule passeth vnto another member, that Iesus whom he preacheth is Christe in deed, through whom saluation is offered to the people: also he declareth the meanes of the redemption purchased by him. Furthermore, he intreateth of his power and office, that they may knowe what good things they ought to hope for at his handes. The conclusion containeth a chiding. For he threatneth to them horrible iudgement, if they refuse the authour of saluation, who offereth himselfe euen of his owne accorde, whom earnestly to desire, the Law and prophetes prouoke. This is in a maner the summe, now let vs discusse euery point by it selfe,

Men and breshren, Because Paul knew that there were many bastardlie sonnes of Abraham, or such as wer growen out of kind, he calleth the Iewes to whom he speaketh by a double name. First he calleth them brethren, hauing respect vnto common kined, notwithstanding he sheweth therewithall that they shal be true Iraelites, if they feare God, & that euen then they are likewise true hearers, because the feare of the Lorde is the beginning of wisdom. In like sort hee maketh the faithfull attentive, and purchaseth audience among them: as if he should say; Seeing many boast that they are sonnes of Abraham, who were vnworthie of such honour, shew your selues to be. no bastardly seede. Let vs learne by this that it is not a fault common to one age onely, that good and sincere worshippers being mixed with hypocrites haue the name of the church common among them. But we must haue a great care hereof, that wee be in deed, that which wee are called: which thing the true feare of Almighty GOD will bring to passe: and not the externall profession alone.

17 *The God of this people.* This preface did witnesse that Paul did goe about no new thing, which might leade away the people from the lawe of Moses. There is but one God who is God of all nations: but hee calleth him God of that people, to whom he had bound himselfe, & who was worshipped amongst the posteritie of Abraham, amongst whom alone true and pure religion was to be found. To the same ende tendeth that which is added immediately, *Hee chose our fathers.* For he testifieth by these wordes, that he seeketh nothing lesse, then that they may fall away from the true and liuing God, who hath seperated them from the residue of the worlde. Neither doe I doubt, but that hee did more manifestly expresse that he did not preach to them an vnknown or strange God: but the same who reuealed himselfe long agoe to their fathers: so that he doth brieflie comprehend the sound knowledge of god grounded in the law, that their faith conceived out of the law & prophets may continue firme. Notwithstanding he doth in the mean season commend and set foorth the free loue of God toward that people. For howe came it to passe that onely the children of Abraham were the church and inheritance of God, saue onely because it pleased God to discouer them from other nations? For there was no worthinesse to distinguish them but the difference began at the loue of God, wherwith he did freely loue Abraham.

Of this free loue of God Moses doth oftentimes put the Iewes in minde: as Deut. 4. 7. 10. 14. 32. and in other places: wherein god did set before vs a mirrour of his wonderfull counsell: in that finding no excellencie in Abraham, an obscure person and miserable idolatrer, hee doth notwithstanding preferre him before all the worlde. Furthermore this election was common to all people, as was also circumcision, whereby god did adopt to himself the seed of Abraham: but there was also a more hidden election, whereby seuering to himselfe a fewe of many children of Abraham, he did declare that not all who came of the seede of Abraham according to the flesh, are reckoned in the spirituall stock.

Deut. 4. 34.
and 7. 8.

He did driue out a people. Paul teacheth that all those benefits which god bestowed afterward vpon the Iewes, did proceed and flow from that free fauour which he did beare toward their fathers. For this was the cause that they wer deliuered by the wonderful power of god, & brought by his hand into the possession of the land of Canaan, after that he had driuen out so many nations for their sake. For it is no small matter for the land to be deprivied of her inhabitants, that she might receiue strangers. This is the fountaine and roote of all good thinges, whereunto Paul calleth vs, that god chose the fathers. This was the reason & cause which moued god to so great patience, that hee would not cast off that rebellious people, who shoulde otherwise haue destroyed themselues a thousand times with their owne wickednesse. Therefore where the scripture maketh mention that their sinnes were pardoned, it saith, that god remembered his covenant. He saith that they were exalted, though they were strangers, that they may remember how worthie & gorgeous their deliuerance was.

18 *He suffered their manners.* The compounde verbe hath greater force and grace in the greeke, whereby the mercifulnesse of god is expressed, in suffering the people whom he knew to be stubborne and disobedient. And Paul giueth vs to vnderstand againe, that the election of god was the cause, that his goodnesse, did striue with the wickednesse of the people. Notwithstanding wee must note that god did so take pittie vpon his elect people, whiles that he will continue firme in his purpose, that he did notwithstanding sharply punish the rebellious and wicked. Hee spared the people in deed, so that hee did not quite destroy them, as he might by good right, but hee founde also meanes, that their wickednesse might not remaine vnpunished. And so that of Iſaias was fulfilled, If the multitude shall be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be sau'd.

Iſai. 10. 22

20 *He gaue them iudges.* Vnder this name the scripture comprehendeth rulers & gouernours, and here is another testimonie of the infinite goodnes of god toward the Iewes, in that he pardoned so many backslidings in the. For it is likely that Paul handled those things more at large which Luke gathereth briefly. And we know what was the estate of the people, during al that time, seing that through vntamed wītōnnes they did euer now & then shake off the yoke. They were often punished with

most

most greuous plagues, yet so soone as they wer once humbled, God deliuered them from the tyrannie of their enemies : So that hee saued the body therof alieue amidst many deaths, foure whole ages and one halfe. And hereby it appeareth how vnworthie they were of the fauor of God which they did despise and reiect so often, vnlesse the constancie of the election had gotten the victorie. For how is it that God is neuer wearied, but that he keepeth promise with those who are truce breakers an hundreth times, saue only because turning his eyes toward his Christe, hee hath not suffered his couenaut grounded in him to decay or perishe.

21 *Afterward they desired.* And this change was all one as if they would quite and manifestly ouerthrowe the gouernment which he had appointed, whereof God himselte complaineth in Samuel. But the stabilitie of the election saued them from beeing punished as suche. madnesse did deserue : yea the wicked and vnlawefull desire of the people, was to God a new & vncredible occasion to erect the kingdome whence Christ shoulde afterwarde come. For how is it that the scepter came to the tribe of Iuda, saue only because the people were desirous to haue a king? And assuredly the people dealt wickedly, but God who knoweth how to vse euill things well, turned that offence into safetie. Whereas
1. Sa. 15. 28. Saul was throwen downe from the kingdome; it serued to reprove the fault of the people, but immediately when the kingdome is established;
Gen. 49. 10. Dauids familie, the prophesie of Iacob was verified.

22 *I haue found Dauid my seruant.* This title was not so much cited in praise of the persō, as that Paul might make the Iewes more attētiue to receiue Christ. For the Lord doth testifie that his mind was thorowly set vpon Dauid for no light cause, but he commendeth in him some singular thing, and by extolling him so highly, his intent is to lift vp the mindes of the faithfull vnto Christ in his person. The place is taken out of the fourescore and ninth Psalme. Only Paul putteth in that which is not there to be found, that Dauid was the sonne of Isai, which amplifieth the grace of God. For, seeing that Isai was a breeder of cattell, it was a wonderfull worke of God, to take the least of his sonnes from the sheepe-foldes, and to place him in the throne of the kingdome. By the worde found, God meaneth that he had gotten such a man as hee would. Not that Dauid had brought to passe by his owne trauell and industrie, that he should meete God, being such a one, but the phrase is taken from the cōmō custome of men. But the question is, Seeing that Dauid sel so greuously, how God giueth testimonie of his continual obedience. We may answer two waies, for God had respect rather vnto the continual course of his life, then vnto euery of his particular actions: secondly, he did thus set him forth, not so much for his owne merite as for his Christs sake. Assuredly hee had deserued by one wicked fact eternall destruction for him and his, and so much as in him laid, the way of the blessing of God was shut vp, that there might nothing but vipers seed come of Bertabe. But that so filthie a fact, in the death of Vrias, turneth to a contrary end by the wonderfull counsell of God, because Salomon is borne and cometh

2. Sam. 11. 2

meth of that vnlooked for wedlock which was full of treacherie, and finally polluted with many spots. And though Dauid sinned greuously, yet because he followed God all the course of his life, he is prayſed without exception, that he shewed himselfe obedient to God in all things. Though (as I haue said before) the spirit carieth vs vnto a farther thing, yea the common calling of all the faithfull in Christ the head is here depicted out to vs,

Mat. 22. 42.
and 15. 22.

23 According to promise. This clause doth also proue that whiche I haue already said elsewhere, that in sending Christ, the Lorde had respect only vnto his owne faithfulness and goodness. For hee sent him because he had promised so to doe. And as the promise doth testifie that saluation was free, so it doeth also purchase no small credite to the Gospel: because it appeareth by this that Christ came not at a sodaine, of whom there was neuer any thing spoken: but that he who was promised from the beginning, was now giuen in his time. But the promises which Luke here toucheth by the way, are famous and well known. And they were so comon among the Iewes, that they called Christ commonly, by no other name, but the sonne of Dauid. Hee saith that Iesus was raised vp to Israel, because though saluation belong to all the whole world, yet was he first a minister of circumcision to fulfill the promises made to the fathers. He translateth the Hebrew name *Iesus* into *soter* in Greeke. So that he vttered one thing twise: and yet here is no superfluous repetition: because he meant to declare that Christe is in deede and doeth performe that which the name giuen him by God by the voice of the Angel, doth import.

Rom. 15. 8.

24 After that Iohn had preached before the face of his entrance, the baptisme of repentance to all the people of Israel:

25 And when Iohn fulfilled his course, he said: Whom doe yee thinke me to be? I am not, But behold, he cometh after me, whose shoe latchets I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the generation of Abraham, and those who among you feare God, to you is the worde of this saluation sent.

24 Wee knowe what office Iohn had, to wit, to prepare the way of the Lorde. Therefore Paule bringeth in his testimonie, that hee may proue to the Iewes, that he preached no false Christ, but the true Christ of God, whom that most famous forerunner had before commended: not that mans testimonie is sufficient to proue so weightie a matter: but there was another respect to be had to Iohn, whom all men almost did thinke to be a prophet of God. Therefore hence commeth the authoritie of the testimonie, that a cryer sent from heauen, and no priuate man, speaketh of Christe. And Paule reciteth two thinges summarilie concerning Iohn, that he taught the baptisme of repentance before Christ his coming: Secondly, that casting from him of his owne accorde the title and honour of the Messias, hee submitted himselfe to Christ.

The baptisme of repentance. Baptisme brought in contrarie to the rite and custome of the lawe was a token of great alteration. For it was vnlawful to renue any thing before Christes coming. The Iewes had in deed in the lawe their baptismes or washings which were also exercises of repentaunce, but Iohn was the authour of new and strange baptism, or rather the minister, who put them in hope of the restoring long looked for and desired. When he calleth it the baptisme of repentance, he doth not exclude remission of sinnes, but hee speaketh according to the circumstance of the place, because this baptisme was a preparation vnto the faith of Christ. And we must note the phrase, that hee preached baptisme: Whereby we are taught, that the sacramentes are then rightly administred, when doctrine is ioyned with the visible figure. For the mouth of the baptiser must not be dumb: because the signe is vaine without doctrine.

25 *When Iohn fulfilled his course.* The second member of the testimonie, that when Iohn drew neere to the end of his course, hee sent his disciples to Christ. For he had fashioned the before with the rudimente of baptisme, and then he sent them to Christ (as they say) from hand to hand. And this interrogatio, Whom do ye thinke me to be is not a question of one that doubteth. For Iohn reproveth and chideth the Iewes, because they did falsly giue to him the honour of the Messias, though it may be read in one text, I am not he whom you take me to be: yet the other reading is more vsuall, as it hath also greater force to refute the error. Furthermore, his testimonie doth deserue greater credite, in that he doth willingly refuse the honour offered him (which he might haue take to himselfe not without commendation) and doth submit himself to another. There cannot assuredly be any suspition of ambition, or of seeking after honour here, which may diseredite his words.

Behold he cometh. That is, he is about to come: the Hebrew phrase which is common enough euen in the new testament, whereas he confesseth that he is unworthy to loose the latches of Christes shoes: It is a prouerbiall figure, whereby he abaseth himselfe so much as he can, least his greatnesse darken Christ his glory: for he meant to do that faithfully which was giuen him in charge, that Christ alone might haue the preheminence. Therefore he saith: that how great soeuer he be, yet he is nothing in respect of Christ. For though Gods seruants haue their dignity: yet being compared to Christ, they must all be as nothing, that he alone may excell: as we see all starres vanish away, that they may giue place to the brightnesse of the Sunne.

26 *Men and brethren.* Paul doth againe prick forward the Iewes to embrace Christ. For this ought to haue raised no smal studie and attentionesse in their mindes, when as they saw their saluation handled, and that the message of saluation was appointed properly for them. He calleth them *children of Abraham*, not only for honours sake, but that they may know that they be heires of eternall life, and hee speaketh them for sayre, that it might not greue them to depart from the Scribes and priests whom they worshipped: because they must needs receiue Christ:

Further-

Furthermore we must remember that which I saide before: though the gate of the kingdome of heauen were set open to the Gentiles, yet were not the Iewes throwne downe from their estate, but were counted the first begotten in Gods familie. Therefore is it that he saith, that saluatiō was sent to them, because they wer first in order: yet because the carnall kintred was of it selfe of no great importance, and the vngodlines of many brake out, Paul speaketh specially vnto the true worshippers of God, signifying, that wordes were but vaine, vnlesse the feare of God reigne in their hearts, which may receiue them, and receiuing them, may foster them. Wee must note this title of the Gospel, that it is called the worde of *saluation*. Wherefore their hardnes must needs be great whom it doth not allure with the sweetnesse that is in it. But though it be such naturally, yet is it made accidentally the sauour of death vnto death, to the reprobate. 2. Cor. 3. 16.

27 For those which dwell in Ierusalem, and their rulers, seeing that they knewe him not, neither the voices of the prophetes which are read euery Sabbath day: when they had condemned him, they fulfilled them.

28 And when they had found no cause of death in him, they desired Pilas that hee would crucifie him.

29 And after that they had fulfilled all things which were written of him, when they had taken him downe from the tree, they put him in a tombe.

30 But God raised him vp from the dead.

31 Who appeared many dayes to those which went vp with him from Galilee to Ierusalem who are his witnessses to the people.

27 He doth wisely and in due time preuent an offence which might haue been a great hinderance to their faith. For Ierusalem was Gods sanctuarie, the kinges seat, the fountaine of truth, and the light of all the whole worlde, but Christ was put to death there. Furthermore, nothing could seeme more absurd to looke too, then to receiue him, who was cast out of the temple of God: and to seeke the doctrine of saluation any where els, then there whence God himselfe had testified it should come. Moreover by beleeuing in Christ they seemed to make a departure from the church. And therefore this one obiection was strōg enough to refute al Paul his sermon, why doest thou force vpon vs vnder colour of Gods couenant, a man whom the principall part of the holy people condemned? This obiection doth Paul answer, least it hinder the course of the Gospel. And not that only, but he turneth it also to the contrarie part. For seeing that the author of life was despised & reiectēd at Ierusalem, Paul exhorteth the men of Antioch, at least those who among them feared God, that they receiue him so much the more ioyfully. For this doth the casuall worde declare: as if hee should haue saide, seeing that Ierusalem knewe not her good, it behoueth you to bee the more awaked and inflamed, least the same vnthankfulnesse and frowardnesse bee founde in you.

But hee vseth another reason to remoue the offence, to wit, that their

vngodlinesse was so farre from diminishing any whit of Christ his diuine excellencie, that it ought rather to serue to proue & establishe the same. For whereby doth Christ better appeare, then because all that was fulfilled in him which had been foretolde in the Lawe and prophetes? Furthermore, what got the enemies of Christe, saue only that in him shined the plaine truth of the scripture? It must needs bee that Christ shoulde bee reiected of the chiefe: for it was so foretolde, *The stone which the builders refused, hath God made the head of the corner.* Christe must needs haue been condemned among the wicked, that he might acquit vs before god: it was expedient that sinnes should be laid vpon him, that he might make satisfaction for the same: that he should be offered vpon the crosse, that the shadow with sacrifices of the law might cease. For euen the scripture contained these things. Isa. 53. Dan. 9. Therefore the more violently the captaines of the people sought to extinguishe Christ, they did in very deed proue him to be Christe, and the Lord did wonderfully deceiue them, so that their obstinate impietie doeth more edifie the faith of the godly, then destroy it. Of the same sort are almost all offences which lead away weake and inconstant soules from Christ. For if they would throughly ponder the whole processe of the worke of God, there should be matter of confirmation, where they faint. Therefore it commeth to passe for the most part that we be troubled with offences & stumbling blockes, because while we behold those things which belong to Christe with pore blind eyes, wee imagine that to bee blacke which is white. And we see how far Paul is from dissimulation, and how freely he professeth the truth of the matter, that Christ was hated not only of the common sort, but also of the chief chieftaines. & that he was not hissed at by a few, but oppressed by the wicked conspiracie of al the people. That was hard & hateful at the first conflict, but Paul opposeth a more strong engine, that God vsed them against their willes as a touch stone whereby he might trie his sonne. Seeing that the Gospel standeth in the same state at this day, let vs not bee ashamed with Paul to confesse, that the proude princes of the worlde, and those who beare the greatest sway in the church, are the deadly enemies of Christ, seeing that doth rather turne to Christes prayse then reproch. For by this meanes is the scripture fulfilled.

Seeing they knew him not. Though deliberate malice did enforce the rulers to oppress Christ, yet doth Paul truly impute it to ignorance, because otherwise they would neuer haue crucified the Lord of glory. 1. Cor. 2. For the malice of the wicked is like to raging madnesse, and in seeing it doth not see. Vndoubtedly, we need not doubt of this that they were deprived of a sound minde and the light of the Spirit, who were not affraide to fight against God to their owne destruction. Again he hitteth them in the teeth with ignorance of the scripture. And least any shoulde obiekt that he speaketh of some dark and vnkowne matter: he addeth also, that he doth speak of no other propheties then of those which are read euery Sabbath day, as if he should say, that the oracles of scripture are most plain & known to the most ignorant, & yet they knew this not.

Thus

Thus doth Paul teach, how monstrous their vnbeleefe was, that he may make the hearers loath it. And by this example are wee taught that although the Lorde appeare to vs by the scripture, yet all men haue not eyes. After that, also the blockishnesse of the nation waxed more grosse: as Paul saith elsewhere, that there is a veile put before their face, that they cannot see Moses when hee is present. In the meane season wee must note that we are recalled to the scripture, least the authoritie of great men deceiue vs, neither is there any cause why any man inuēting to himselfe a preiudice according to the wicked meaning of other men, should thinke that he is acquitted. For Paul exhorteth the men of Antioch to iudge out of the scripture against the visured gouernours of the church. For, for this cause is it giuen, that it may be read: and reading is not appointed in vaine by the Lord, but that all godly men may thereby profit, and iudge what is right.

This they fulfilled. So that we see that not only creatures void of vnderstanding, but euen the very Diuell and also the wicked are subiect to the power of God: that hee may execute by them that which with himselfe he hath decreed. The same had we in the thirde & fourth chapters, that when the enemies of Christ did most of all rage to destroy him, yet coulde they not obtaine their purpose: but rather they brought that to passe with their owne hands, which God had in his counsel determined: which thing maketh not a litle for cōmendation of Gods truth: because he is not only of sufficient power to perfourme those things which hee hath promised: but also those who goe about to bring his counsels to nought, doe their indeuour to establish them, though it be against their will. For how should not the truth of God stand which the chiefest enemies are enforced to fulfill. Yet wisdom is necessarie here, least we ioin God and Satan together. For the Iewes are not therefore excusable because they fulfilled the scriptures: because we must consider their wicked will, and not the euent which they did not looke for: yea which ought to be counted a myracle. If we looke into their worke by it selfe, it is quite contrarie to God. But as god doth in the Sun and other planets by wonderfull cunning temper contrary motions, & such as striue among them selues: so he directeth the peruers indeuours of the wicked by his secret power vnto another end then they thought vpon and did desire, least they should do any thing but that which he would. They in deed, as touching themselues do contrary to his will: but it falleth out according to the will of God after an incomprehensible maner. Forasmuch as this course is contrary to nature, no maruell if the wisdom of the flesh see it not. Therefore it must be discerned with the eie of faith, or rather it must be reuerenced: & those dogs who barke against it, must be despised with their wantonnesse.

28 *When as they found no cause of death.* It was very appertinent to the matter that they should know that Christ was put to death gilelesse, For we could not haue bin iustified by his death, if he had suffered death for his owne euill deedes. Therefore it was requisite that he shoulde bee gilelesse, that his death might be a satisfaction for the sins of the worlde.

Act. 3. 23.
Act. 4. 28.

And vndoubtedly I thinke that Paul did plainly declare, that Pilat condemned Christ, not according to the office of a iudge, but that he consented that he should be put to death, after that he was ouercome with the vngodly requests of the people: and also that the Iewes were driuen by lust, and not enforced by reason to desire Christes death. For it stood him vpon to terrifie the hearers, that they might not couple themselves to so wicked a fact. But Luke doth now in few wordes set downe after his common custom, those thinges which Paule did then more at large declare.

29 *When they had fulfilled all things.* To wit, which it pleased God should be done by them. For they did so handle Christe, that there was nothing of the prophesies of the scripture left vnsfulfilled. By this means is the stumbling block (which the vnderstanding of the flesh conceiue by reason of the ignominie of the crosse) taken away, that the son of god was not laid open to the furious furie of the wicked: but he obeyed his fathers decree. Furthermore it doth also in scripture appear, what cōditiō was appointed for him in times past. Whereas he saith that Christ was buried by the same which had slaine him: it seemeth contrary to the historie of the Gospel: but it may be that Luke did take the word *buried* indefinitely. And if it please you to referre it vnto the same it shall be Synecdoche. For he was buried with Pilat his leaue, and at the appointment and pleasure of the priestes, there were watchmen set to watch the graue. Therefore though Ioseph and Nicodemus did burie Christ: that is ascribed vnproperly and yet not absurdly to the Iewes: because it is not Pauls drift in this place to commend the good deede, but to proue Christ his resurrection: because God tooke him out of the graue, whom his enemies had shut vp there. Therefore hee giueth vs. to vnderstande that the bodie of Christe was not taken thence priuile or by stealth, but that it was laide in a place both famous and knowne to the aduersaries, and so consequently, that euen they were set to watch it, & yet for all this it was not found: Whence wee may gather the certaintie of the resurrection.

30 *God hath raised him vp.* The death of Christ was the saluation of the godly, yet ioyned with the resurrection: therefore doth Paul stand longer vpon this second point. For hee shoulde neuer haue perswaded his hearers that they were to seeke saluation in Christes death, vnlesse the power of Almighty GOD had appeared in raising Christe from death.

31 After that he hath said that Christ came out of the graue, which was beset with the hired ministers of the aduersaries: hee addeth now that hee appeared to many of the disciples, which bare faithfull witness to the people. And he calleth them *witnesses* either in respect of their office: because they were chosen for this purpose, as we haue alredy said in the first chapter: or els declaring simplic, that they professed openly and freely that which they knewe concerning Christe. Whereuppon it followeth that the matter was made knowne openly at Ierusalem. And the prooffe was not so light, because in the fearefull power of the enemies,

mies, who were readie and bent to resist, and did omit nothing, there were notwithstanding such as did openly affirme that Christ rose again, and were also such as saw that thing with their eies: for if there had bin any refutation in readinesse, the Scribes would not haue neglected it.

32 *And wee preache to you glad tidings that the promise made to the fathers,*

33 *Hath God fulfilled to their children: having raised vp Iesus, as it is written in the second Psalme, Thou art my sonne this day haue I begotten thee.*

34 *And in that he hath raised him vp from the dead, not to return hereafter to corruption, hee hath saide thus, I will giue you the holy thynges of Dauid.*

35 *Therefore he saith also in another place: Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.*

36 *Dauid in deede when he had serued his time, by the counsell of God hee fel on sleepe: and was laid vnto his fathers, and saw corruption.*

37 *But he whom God raised saw no corruption.*

32 *We preach to you glad tidings.* Hee doth nowe challenge to himselfe the office and honour of an Apostle, that he may be heard as a lawful minister of God. And he saith the summe of the Ambassage inioyned him, is, that that is reuealed & giuen in their time which was promised in times past. And in fewe wordes doeth he comprehend many & great matters. First, hee giueth them to vnderstande that hee bringeth in nothing which is new or contrary to the law and prophets, but that he did reueale the fulfilling of that doctrine which they themselues did confesse and were perswaded to haue been deliuered by God. Whereupon it followeth that they cannot refuse that which hee offereth them, but they shall breake the couenant made with the fathers by God, so much as in them shall lie: secondly, hee commendeth the faithfulness of God, because it doth now in very deed appeare, that there was nothing promised in times past vnaduisedly or in vaine: but he doth chiefly extoll the greatnesse of the grace giuen at length in Christe. For we must note the comparison betweene them and the fathers, when hee saith, that they had gotté that which was promised to the fathers. For the more liberalie the grace of God is powred out vpon them, the more filthie shall their vnthankfulness be, if they shall despice or loath that vnestimable good thing. For what els were this, but to cast downe at their feete a treasure euen reached out to them that they might take holde thereof, and so consequently laid in their lap, the hope whereof was reuerentlie embraced by the father when it was shewed them a farre off, and which they did foster during their whole life? But some man may ask this question concerning those who liued vnder the law, whether euen they wer not made partakers of the promises? I answere, that there is such a societie of the same grace amōg vs which doth not hinder the lōg distāce. But this was Paul his meaning, that their faith stood as it were in doubt,

vtill Christ appeared, in whome all the promises of God are Yea and
 2. Cor. I. 19. Amen: as he teacheth, 2. Cor. 1. Therefore we be the heires of the same
 20. kingdome of heauen, and partakers of the same spirituall good things,
 which God bestoweth vpon his children: also God gaue to them some
 tast of his loue in this life, as we tast him now. But Christ who is the sub-
 stance of all good things and of eternall life, was only promised to them
 but he is giuen to vs: and they desired him as being far off, we inioy him
 being present.

33 To their children, namely to vs. It is certaine that Paule speaketh
 of naturall children, who had their beginning of the holy fathers, which
 wee must therefore note, because certaine brainicke men drawing all
 things vnto allegories, dreame that there is no respect to be had in this
 place of kinred, but only of faith. And with such an inuentiō they make
 the holie couenaunt of God of none effect, where it is said, I will be thy
 Gen. 17. 7. God, and the God of thy seed. It is faith (say they) alone, which maketh
 vs the children of Abraham. But I say on the other side, that, euen those
 who are borne the children of Abraham according to the flesh, are also
 counted the spirituall children of God, vnlesse they growe out of kinde
 Rom. 11. 16. through vnbelleefe. For the boughs bee naturally holy, because they
 spring from an holy roote, vtill they become profane through their
 owne fault. And assuredly it is Paule his drifte, to allure the Iewes vnto
 Christe, and that he may doe this, they must bee distinguished from the
 common sort by some priuiledge, and yet it followeth not thereupon
 (which these knaues doe odiously obiekt) that the grace of God is tyed
 to the carnall seed. Because though the promise of life came by inheri-
 tance to the posteritie of Abraham: yet many were deprived by their vnbe-
 liefe. Therefore faith is the cause that of a great multitude, only a few are
 counted children. And that is the double electiō whereof I spake before.
 The one common to all the whole nation alike: because the first adoptiō
 of God containeth the whole familie of Abraham. The other which is
 restrained vnto the secret counsel of god: and is at length established by
 faith, that it may be confirmed to men. Therefore Paul doth well & tru-
 lie affirme that that was perfourmed to the Iewes, which god had pro-
 mised to the fathers. For it was promised to them also, as Zacharias faith
 in his song, The oth which he sware to our father Abraham that he would
 giue himselfe for vs, &c. And yet the worthinesse of that nation doth not
 hinder but that the grace of Christ may also spread it selfe throughout
 the whole world: because the first begottē hath the first degree of honor,
 so that he doth notwithstanding leaue the second place to his brethren.
 For in that after the old people wer cast off, the possession of the church
 was left emptie for strangers, it began to be a new occasion of gathering
 the church of the Gentiles, but & if that people had stood in the faith,
 the Gentiles had been ioyned into the common societie of honor.

After that he had raised Christ. The word raised, in my iudgement rea-
 cheth farther, thē it doth where it is shortly after repeated. For he doth
 not onely say that Christ rose from the dead, but that he was appointed
 of god, and as it were brought to light by the hand of god, that he might
 fulfill

fulfill the office of the Messias, as the scripture teacheth euery where, that kings and Prophets are raised vp. For the word *anastefai*, is sometimes taken in this sense: And this reason moueth me thus to thinke, because God by sending his sonne into the world, did fulfill his promise made to his seruants in times past, by the effect it selfe.

Like as in the second Psalme. Though the Greeke bookes agree in the number, yet we must not passe ouer that which Erasmus saith, that many of the old writers read the first Psalme. And it may be that Luke wrote so. For that which at this day is counted the second Psalme, might haue bin called the first not without reason, seing that it is likely that the first Psalme was added in steed of a Proeme by the Scribes and Priestes, by whose industrie the Psalmes were gathered into one bodie. For the name of the authour is not set to it, and it doeth onely exhort to meditate vpon the Law of God. But there is no great weight in that matter. For this is the chiefeest thing, that we know how properly and how well Paul applieth the testimonie taken out of the Psalme vnto the matter which he hath in hand. We do not denie that Dauid when he saw that he was on euery side assailed by his enimies, and that they were of greater power & might, than that he was able to resist them, doth set against them Gods aide, who he knew was the authour of his kingdome and Reigne. But forasmuch as he was a figure of the true Messias, we know that those things were shadowed in his person, which doe appertain wholly and perfectly to the Messias alone. And the text it self doth proue sufficiently, that there is not onely a simple and bare thankesgiuing contained there, agreeable to Dauids kingdome, but it is a higher prophetic. For it is wel knowne that Dauid did in his life scarce tast of the hundredth part of the glory which is spoke of in this place, concerning which we haue spoken more at large Chapter 4. Now let vs looke nigher into the words, kings are in deed called sonnes of God. Psal. 82. 6. But seing that God doth intend to prefer Dauid before all other kings, and to exempt him out of the number of them: this title of honor is giuen to him principallie aboue all other: not because so great honour resteth in his person, because by this meanes he should passe the Angels, as it is in the Epist. to the Heb. 1. cha. Therefore he is thus gorgeously set out in respect of Christ, whose image he was; that God doth not take him for one of the common, sort, or for some one of a great multitude, but he doth as it were acknowledge him to his onely begotten sonne. The prooffe followeth, Because God did beget him, when he established the kingdome in his hand. For that was not done by mans industrie, but God shewed from heauen the inuincible power of his hand, whereby it might plainly appeare that he reigned according to Gods counsel. Therefore this Begetting by him mentioned, must be referred vnto the vnderstanding or knowledge of men: to wit, because it was then openlie known that he was begotten of God, when as he was set vpon the throne of the kingdome wonderfully, contrarie to the hope of all men, and did by the heauenly power of the Spirit breake infinit conspiracies: because hee could not reigne, vntill he had brought all nations round about him in subiection.

tion, as if a certaine world were subdued. Now let vs come vnto Christ. He came not into the world without testimony, whereby he did proue that he was the son of God. For his glory did appeare, as became the onely begotten son of god, as it is written Iohn. 1. 14. and he saith euerywhere that he hath God for the witnesse and maintainer of this honor. Therefore God begat Christ, when he gaue him certaine markes, whereby he might be knowne to be his true & liuely image & son. And yet this doth not let, but that Christ is the wisdome, begotten of the eternall father before time, but that is the secreat generation: & now Dauid declareth that it was reuealed to men: so that the relation is as we haue said, vnto men and not vnto God: because that which was hidden in the heart of God, was made known to me. And it is a verie fine figure, because Christ his diuinitie was no lesse declared and established, then if he had bin begotten of God before the eyes of men. I know that Augustine his deepe sight doth please some, that by to day is meant perpetuities. But when as the spirit of God himself is his owne interpreter, & whereas he doth expound that by the mouth of Paul which he had said by Dauid, we must not inuent any other sense. And forasmuch (as the same Paul doth witness) that Christ was declared to be the son of god in power, when he rose from the dead, we gather that this was the principal token of celestiall excellency, & that the father did then bring him truly to light, that the world might know that he was begotten of him. Therefore though God began to raise Christ when he came into the world, yet his raising was then as it were perfect & full: because whereas he was humbled before, hauing taken as it were the forme of a seruant, he did then appeare to be the conqueror of death & the Lord of life, so that he wanted nothing of that maiesty which was meet for the son of god, & that for the onely begotten sonne.

34 *That he should not returne.* He addeth now the other member, that Christ was once raised from death that he may liue for euer, as Paul teacheth Rom. 6. 10. He dieth no more, neither shall death haue dominion ouer him any more: because he liueth to God. For the hope conceiued of Christ his resurrection should be slender and cold, if he were yet subiect to destruction or to any change. Therefore he is said to be entred into the kingdome of God, that he may also giue to his, eternal felicity; liuing for euer. For because Christ rose rather for our sake then for himselfe, the perpetuities of life which the father hath giuen him, reacheth vnto vs all, and is ours. Notwithstanding the place of Isay which is here cited, seemeth to make but a litle for prooffe of Christ his immortalitie, I will giue you the holy things of Dauid. But it is not so. For seing Isaias speaketh of the redemption promised to Dauid, and affirmeth that the same shalbe firme and stable, we doe well gather by this, the immortal kingdome of Christ wherein the eternities of saluation is grounded. And Paul followed the Greek interpreters, when he put *Holy things*, for mercies. *Cheffed*, which signifieth meeke, merciful and gentle, is wont by the Grecians to be translated *Holy*. Therefore they translated חסד of Dauid; the holy things of Dauid, whereas the Prophet meaneth rather the grace

grace promised to Dauid. But Paul granted this to the ignorant and weake, who were better acquainted with the Greeke reading, especially for as much as the force of the testimonie consisteth in another point. For this is Paul his meaning in summe, If the grace bee eternall which God saith hee will giue in his sonne, the life of his sonne must be eternall, and not subiect to corruption. For wee must hold this rule, that all the promises of God are in Christ, yea and Amen: and that therefore they can not be of any force vnlesse he, do quicken them. 2. Cor. 1. 20.

35 *Thou shalt not suffer thy holy one.* This place was likewise cited by Peter in the first sermon set downe by Luke in the second Chapt. where I expounded the same: therefore let the readers repaire thither. Onely I will touch this briefly, that Dauid putteth two Hebrew words for the graue, as he vseth repetitions commonly, the former whereof is deriued of desiring or lusting, because the graue deuoureth all things as an vn-satiable gulf: & the other of corruption: according to this etymologie Dauid's meaning is faithfully expressed in Greeke. For the qualitie of the graue is noted, when as it receiueth the corpes, and doeth as it were swallow it vp, that it may rot there, and may at length perish when it is consumed. Paul affirmeth that that belongeth to Christ alone, that hee was free and saued from corruption. For though his bodie was laide in graue, corruption had notwithstanding no title to it, seing that it laide there whole as in a bedde vntill the day of the resurrection. Acts. 2. 27.

37 *When Dauid had serued his time.* Least any man should thinke that that place entreateth of Dauid, Paul sheweth briefly, that this agreeth not to Dauid in all points, whose corpes was rotten in the graue. Therefore it remaineth, that because this was a priuiledge belonging to Christ alone, that Dauid Prophecied of him in Spirite. Neuertheles we must note the proportion betweene the members and the head: for as the truth of this prophecie was found whole and perfect in Christ alone as in the head: so it taketh place in all the members according to the measure and order of euerie man. And for as much as Christ rose to this ende that hee may fashion and make our base bodie like to his glorious bodie: vpon this condition do the godly go downe into the pit, that rottennes may not consume their bodies. Therefore according to the hope of the resurrection to come, Dauid saith by good right that he shall not see corruption: for that ought not altogether to be counted corruption, for which there is a better restoring prepared: for the bodies of the faithfull corrupt to this end, that they may put on blessed incorruption in their time. Yet this is no let, but that the estate of the head and members may be farre vnlike, and that wee may follow the sonne of God a farre off and lastly. Now we see that both things are true and filie said, that Dauid and the rest of the faithfull in as much as they shall be like to their head, shall not see corruption, and yet the sonne of God alone shall be free from corruption wholly. We must note the phrase when he saith that Dauid serued his age, or the men of his time. Phil. 3. 21.

The olde interpreter distinguisheth it otherwise, and certein Greek copies agree therto: to wit, that Dauid serued the wil of God in his time. Which reading though it be to be allowed, yet it dooth not cause me to mislike the other. For it is neither superfluous nor colde, that he slept by the wil of God or the counsel of God: because the meaning thereof is, that God in the death of Dauid did not forget that prophecie: as if he should saie that the bodie of Dauid laid in the graue not without the counsel or purpose of God, vntil it should rise againe, that the effect of the prophecie might be extended vnto Christ. If no man mislike that which I saie, we are taught heerby to what end men liue in the world, to wit, that one man maie help another. For euerie man doth not liue neither is born for himselfe, but mankind is knit together with an holie knot. Therefore vnlesse we be disposed to ouerthrow the lawes of nature, let vs remember that we must not liue for our selues, but for our neighbours. But heer maie a question be asked whether we ought not also to care for our posteritie? I answer that the ministerie of the godlie is also profitable for the posteritie: as we see that Dauid being dead doth profit vs more at this daie, then a great part of those which liue with vs: but Paul meaneth simplie, that the faithful during their whole life employ themselves and their offices to help their neighbours, and that death is vnto the as a goale because they haue made an end then, when the Lord calleth them out of the world. The sum is, that we must haue respect first to our time, that we maie serue our brethren with whom; and among whom we lead our life: and secondlie we must do our indeuour that the fruit of our ministerie maie redound vnto our posteritie. Seing that God prescribeth his seruants this law, their rashnes cannot be excused, who faine that the dead praie for vs, and that they doo no lesse serue the Church, then whiles they liued.

By the counsel of God he felon sleep. Paul might haue said simplie, that Dauid died: he addeth by *the counsel of God*, that we maie know that that was not fulfilled in the person of the Prophet, which is read in the psalme. Notwithstanding we are taught that the bond of life and death is in like sort appointed for vs by God, as it is. Psa. 90. 3. Thou sendest out men and makest them to passe ouer, again thou saist: Come again ye children of men. Yea Plato setteth down this verie eloquentlie, that it is meet that men passe out of the world not without the leaue and pleasure of God, by whose hand they are placed there as a stading for a time. And for this cause whē he speaketh of Dauids death, he maketh mention of the counsel of God, that we maie know that corruptiō did not happen to him by chance, as if God had forgotten his promise: but that it came to passe by Gods prouidēce, that the faithful might know that the prophecie was to be referred vnto another. *To sleep and to be laid vnto the Fathers*, are formes of speeches so wel knowen and so common, that they need no exposition.

38 Therefore be it known vnto you, that through him remission of sins is promised to you,

39 And

39 And from all things from which yee could not be iustificed in the Law of Moses.

40 Who soeuer beleeueth in this man, is iustificed.

41 Therefore take heed, least that befall you, which is said in the Prophets:

42 Behold yee despisers, and wonder and vanish away: because I do a worke in your dayes, a worke which yee shall not beleue, if a man tell it you.

38 Therefore be it knowne vnto you. After that he hath declared the meane whereby saluation is purchased through Christ, he doth now in-treat of his office and power. And this is the principall point, to know what good things we haue by the comming of Christ, and what we are to hope for at his hands. And although Luke setteth downe in a worde that Paul preached of the benefits of Christ: yet there is no cause why any man should doubt but that so great matters were handled weightily and onely according as their dignitie did require. By this word *Be it knowne* vnto you, Paul meaneth that nothing should hinder them from knowing such an excellent & plain matter saue only sloth: & that therefore it was an absurd thing that those benefits of God should be hidden from the faithfull, which were offered by Christ. For he was sent with the shrill preaching of the Gospel, which our faith ought to heare, that it may enter into the sure possession of his good things. For we must know what he is that we may inioy him truly. Forgiuenes of sinnes is set first, whereby God doth reconcile vs vnto himself. That which God will haue preached to all his people, doeth he shewe to be necessarie for all men. For Paul speaketh not to one or two, but to all the Iewes which were at Antioch. Therefore we must first marke that we be all enemies to God through sinnes 2. Chapt. Collos. Whereupon it followeth that we are all excluded from the kingdom of God, and are giuen ouer to eternall death, vntill God receiue vs to fauour by the free forgiuenesse of sinnes. We must also note this, that God doth pardon to vs our sinnes, and that he is reconciled through the Mediator, because like as without him there is no satisfaction, so neither is there any pardon or forgiuenesse of guiltines. These be principles of our faith which are not learned in the schooles of the Philosophers, That all mankind is condemned, and drowned in sinne, that there is in vs no righteousness which is able to reconcile vs to God: that the onely hope of saluation resteth in his mercie, whiles that he doth freely forgiue vs: and that those remaine vnder the guilt, which flie not vnto Christ, and seeke not forgiuenesse in his death.

And from all things. He doth secretly preuent that which might seem contrary to the former doctrine. For looke how many ceremonies of the Law there were, so many exercises were there to obtaine remission of sinnes. Therefore the Iewes might readily obiekt, if he alone doe reconcile God to vs, our sinnes being done away, to what end serue so many washings and sacrifices, which we haue hitherto vsed according to the prescript of the Law? Therefore least the Ceremonies of the Law hinder the Iewes, Paul teacheth that Christ doth that, which they were
not

not able to do. Not that Paul spake so briefly and compendiously (for he did not hope that the Iewes would at the first come vnto Christ) casting from them sodainly the affiance which they had in the righteousness of the Law) but it was sufficient for Luke briefly to collect the sum of those things which he then taught in iust and due order. His meaning is, that the Mediator tooke away that let from the Iewes, wherein they did sticke. The ceremoniall Law ought in deede to haue bin a schoole-master to leade them by the hand vnto Christ: all rites commanded by God were helps to help and further their faith: but as men vse preposterously to corrupt the holy ordinances of God, they stop the way before themselves by their ceremonies, & they shut the gate of faith, that they could not come to Christ. They thought they had righteousness in sacrifices, that by washings was gotten true cleannes, that god was pleased with them so soone as they had ended their external pompe in sum, forsaking the bodie they laid hold vpon vain shadowes. God did in deed appoint no vnprofitable or vaine thing in the Law. Wherefore ceremonies were sure and vndoubted testimonies of remission of sins. For God did not lye in these words, Let the sinner doe sacrifice and his iniquitie shalbe purged. But as Christ was the end of the Law, and the heavenly patterne of the tabernacle, so the force and effect of all Ceremonies did depend vpon him. Whereby it is proued that they were vaine shadowes, when he was set aside. Now we see Pauls drift and purpose, to wit, that he meant to draw away the Iewes from the false and peruerse confidence which they reposed in the Law, least being puffed vp, they should thinke that they had no need of Christs helpe, or least they should seeke onely externall felicitie in him.

Heb. 8.5.

Be iustified in the Law. This place doth plainly shew, what the word Iustifie doth import in all other places where it is vsed: to wit, to be deliuered & acquitted. There was mention made of remission of sins, Paul affirmeth that there is no other way whereby we can obtain the same but the grace of Christ. Least any man should obiekt that there be remedies to be found in the law: he answereth that ther was in the no force. Therefore the sense is plain, That they cannot be iustified from sin in the law, because the rites of the law were neither iust nor lawful prices to remoue guiltines, they were nothing worth of themselves to deserue righteousness, neither were they sufficient recompences to appease God. Certainly it cannot be denied (but wickedly) that that iustification annexed to remission of sins, is as it were the meanes & way to obtaine the same. For what else doth Paul go about, but to confirm that saying, that our sins are forgien vs through the benefit of Christ: by answering contrary obiections? And he proueth it, because neither satisfactions, neither al the rites of the law can iustifie vs frō sin. Therefore he is iustified by Christ, who is freely losed from the gilt & iudgment of eternal death, to which he was subiect. This is the righteousness of faith, whiles that God counteth vs iust, by not imputing our sins. This only proprietie of the word is sufficient to refute the cauils of the Papists, who hold that we are not iustified by pardon or by free accepting, but by habit and infused righteousness? There.

Therefore let vs not suffer them to rent in peeces vnworthely & wickedly this text of Paule, when he saith that we are iustified from all things, that we may be assured of remission of sins. And now we must know that the law of Moses is set against Christ, as the principal meane to obtaine righteousness, if there had bin any besides Christ, Paul disputeth in deed of ceremonies: but we must note that there was nothing omitted in the, which might serue to purge sins & to appease god. Yet there was not one of al the ceremonies of the law, which did not make man guilty, as a new handwritting: as Paul teacheth Col. 2. What then? Assuredly God meant to testifie, that men are iustified by the death of his son alone, because he made him sin for vs, who did no sin, that we might haue righteousness in him. 2. Cor. 5. Whereupon it foloweth that whatsoeuer satisfactions are inuented by men, they tend to rob Christ of his honor. *In the Law and in Christ*, signifie as much as by the Lawe and by Christ, according to the Hebrew phrase. Col. 2. 14.

From all things. By this member is refuted the wicked inuention of the Papists, who teach that only original sin, and actuall sins committed before baptism are clearly & freely forgien by Christ, and that other are redeemed by satisfactions. But Paul saith plainly that we are iustified fro sins by Christ throughout the whole course of our life. For we must remember that the ceremonies of the Law were committed to the Iewes; that as wel the profit as the vse thereof might flourish daily in the church, that is that the Iewes might in deed vnderstand, that their sacrifices & washings were not continually iterated in vaine. If the truth & substance of them be found in Christ, it followeth that there is no other satisfaction or sacrifice to put away sins, but his death, otherwise there should be no analogie or proportion betweene this & the old figures. The Papists call vs back vnto repentance and the Keyes: as if the ceremonies of the Law were not exercises to think vpon repentance, and as if the power of the Keyes were not annexed vnto them. But the faith of the Godly was holpen by such helps, that they might flie vnto the grace of the Mediatour alone. Therefore let this remaine sure & certaine, that the righteousness which we haue in Christ is not for one day or a moment, but it is euermlasting, as the sacrifice of his death doth daily reconcile vs to God.

39 *Euerie one that beleueneth.* Paul sheweth how men obtaine the righteousness of Christ: to wit, when they receiue it by faith, and that which faith doth obtaine, is not obtained by any merits of workes. Wherefore Paul his opinion is plaine, That we are iustified by faith alone: which notwithstanding the Papists oppugne and striue against no lesse obstinately than bitterly. Neuertheless it is requisite that we know what the word *beleue* doth import, which is made vnfauery to the papists through ignorance. There be also other benefites of Christ which we reape by faith. For when he regenerateth vs by his Spirit, he restoreth in vs the image of god, & after that the old man is crucified, he fashioneth vs vnto newnes of life. But it was ynough for Luke to expresse this one thing, how men returne into fauour with God, from whom they be estranged by sinne, because we may easily passe thence vnto the residue.

40 *Take heede that that come not vpon you.* Because he had to doe with stiffnecked men, or at least there were diuerse in the companie which were stiffnecked, (as if he ment with a hammer to soften their stubbornnes) he addeth a chiding vnto doctrine. For if the Iewes had bin obedient, and willing to obey, vndoubtedly he would haue sought sweetly to allure them vnto Christ. But it was either their sluggishnes or else their wilfulnesse that caused him to be more angrie. Like as all those must be cited to appeare before Gods iudgement seat, who contemne the grace of Christ, and the horrible iudgement of eternal death must be denounced to those. He signifieth in deed that there is yet place left for repentance, when he willet them to take heed: yet notwithstanding he telleth them therewithall, that vnlesse they beware in time, the horrible vengeance of God is not far off.

Abac. 1. 5.

Which is said in the Prophets. The place which is cited is taken out of the first Chapter of Abacuk, but because all prophecies were gathered into one volume or bodie, Paul saith that it is written in the prophets.

41 And yet he doth not recite word for word the words of Abacuk, which go thus, Behold the Gentiles, and see and wonder, and be astonished: because a worke shall be done in your dayes, which no man shall belecue when it shall be told him. Paul saith, Behold yee despisers, that the Iewes may know that the vengeance which was once brought vpon their fathers, is common to the despisers of the worde: as if he should say, God doth at this day make no lesse account of his word, the contempt whereof he did once punish so sharply. Therefore the Prophet his denunciation doeth appertaine vnto all ages: so that the despisers cannot hope, that they can escape that vengeance now, whereof others haue tasted. They boasted of the Temple, they wanted that they were the people of God, being puffed vp with wicked pride they despised all threatnings. Therefore Paul putteth them in minde, of that, which God by his Prophets doth threaten to the despisers.

A worke in your dayes. The sense is, Those who refuse to belecue the word of God, shal feele his hand, that being at length with plagues conuict, they may know that he spake in earnest. It is a common prouerbe, that experience is the mistresse of fooles. So the Lord doth in deede punish the wicked, that being ramed with miseries, they may begin to confesse his power. And what manner punishment doth he denounce? Because you (saith he) do not belecue my word, I will shew an example among you which no man will belecue: by which words he meaneth that he will punish them, so that the world shall be afraid to see it. For as rebellion against God is a detestable monster, so it is no maruel if of it self it beget monsters of punishments. Therefore we must beware least if we cease to giue credence to gods word, we feelee his hand more mighty than all our senses do comprehend, and euen vnto the astonying of all the whole world, and least euen we be made astonyed through feare, Abacuk prophecieth of the destruction brought vpon them by the Chaldeans: but the punishment whereby God reuenged the contempt of his Gospel was more cruell. Therefore let vs accustome our selues to
feare

fearc God and reuerently imbrace his worde, least some such things befall vs.

42 And when the Iewes were gone out of the Synagogue, the Gentiles exhorted them that they would speake to them words betweene the Sabaoths.

43 And when the Synagogue was dissolued, many of the Iewes and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who talking with them, perswaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And when the Sabaoth was come, almost all the whole citie was gathered to heare the word of God.

45 And when the Iewes saw the multitudes, they were filled with indignation, and spake against those things, which were spoken by Paul, contrarying them and blaspheming them.

42 When they were gone out of the Synagogue. It may be also read, out of the Synagogue of the Iewes & peradventure more fitly. For it is likely that they wer gone out before the multitude was disperied: & that is gathered out of the text, because Luke saith shortly after, that when the Synagogue was dissolued certain of the Iewes did follow Paul & Barnabas. Therefore the sense is, that Paul and Barnabas went out, whiles the Iewes were yet assembled, & that they were then requested by the Gentiles to take some paines with them in the meane season.

43 And that afterward there came certain of the Iewes & proselytes to Paul, being both desirous to learne, & also that they might make profession of their faith. When as the old interpreter & Erasmus did translate it the Sabaoth following, they did not vnderstand Luke his meaning. For seeing that he intreateth in this place of the Gentiles, I do not think that they choose a Sabaoth wherein they may heare Paul & Barnabas. For that day was appointed for the Iewes, but the Gentiles had no lesse opportunitie vpon other daies: therefore to what end should they defer their desire & prayers vntil the eight day? yea rather they couet to heare Paul whiles he is at leisure, & is not occupied in teaching the Iewes. So that the Lord doth not suffer the to be idle vntil the Sabaoth come, offering vnto the matter in the Gentiles, wherein they may exercise themselves.

42 They would speake words. I haue translated it as it is in Luke, though the article *αυτα*, may bee taken for *αυτα*, as in some other places. Then the sense shuld be, That they were requested, that they wold that weeke intreat of the same things before the gentiles. Furthermore whiles that the gentiles do snatch greedily at euery first opportunity, the Iews being quiet, do neglect that which is set before them; saue only that certain of them ioine themselves to Paul & Barnabas. Luke expresseth the proselytes by name: who seeing they had embraced the doctrine of the Law and did worship the God of Israel, were not puffed vp with that pride, which hindred the Iewes who made boast of their long stock and race.

43 Who speaking. The sense is doubtful. For it may be referred vnto the Iewes and Proselytes, that they exhorted Paul and Barnabas that they should not faint, but stand stoutly in the grace of God. Neither did
Y they

they want occasion : for they sawe cumbates prepared for them: & that therefore they had need of inuincible constancy to suffer and abide the brunts of the contrarie faction. Wherefore that might very well agree, that being enflamed with a desire to go forward, they sought to encourage Paul and Barnabas to hold on. If you referre it vnto Paul and Barnabas, the sense shalbe this : that they did not reiect those which came, but they entertained them courteously and gently, and confirmed and strengthened them, that they might persist in the grace which they had receiued. And this worde *Grace*, doth first comprehend the faith of the Gospel, secondly those good things which come thence to vs: or that I may speake more briefly, the calling into the hope of eternall saluation.

44 *And when the Sabaoth came.* The great assemblie of people doth proue that Paul and Barnabas loytered not betweene the Sabaoths, & that they did not take paines with the Gentiles in vaine. For the studies and desires of the people had beene so prepared; that they all desired to know the whole matter more surely: which they did hope would be, if it shoulde be discussed among the Iewes. For we may guesse that though they were allured with some sweete taste, yet were they not as yet thoroughly perswaded to receiue the doctrine of the Gospell without doubting, but that they came into the Synagogue in a quandarie betweene hope and desire.

45 *They were filled.* It is no new matter, for the rage of the wicked to be inflamed when the light of the Gospel is set somewhat neerer : especially when they see the encrease of sound doctrine, they break out with greater violence to resist. And it is to be doubted whether Luke do mean by the word *zeale*, that they were moued with a certaine wicked indignation, to set themselves against Paul and Barnabas : as ambition is the mother as well of enuy as of all contention : or he take zeale for indignation conceived thereupon : because they did lament that the Gentiles were made equall with the people of God. For they counted this a very vnmeete thing, that the holy treasure of doctrine, which was the proper inheritance of the children, should lie as it were at all mens feete.

Gain saying and blaspheming. They were so sore set vpon resisting, that they breake out at length into Blasphemy. And Satan doth for the most part driue the wicked vnto such madnesse, that when they be ouercome with reasons and discouraged, they wax harder and harder, & wittingly & willingly they spue out at length blasphemies against God and the truth. Wherefore we must take so much the more heed, when as the truth of God is plainly set before vs, least if we be carried away with a desire to speake against it, we fall streightway into that steepe downe.

Or bold-
nesse,

46 *And when Paul and Barnabas had taken libertie, they said: It was necessarie that we should first preach the word of God to you. And after that ye reiect it, and do not iudge your selues worthy of eternal life, behold we turne vnto the Gentiles.*

- 47 For thus hath the Lord commanded vs: I haue made thee a light of the gentiles: that thou maist be the saluation vnto the end of the earth.
- 48 And when the Gentiles hearde, they reioysed; and glorified the word of the Lorde: and they beleueed, as manie as were ordained vnto eternall life.
- 49 And the worde of the Lord was spread abroad throughout the whole Region.
- 50 And the Iewes stirred certaine religious and honest women, and the chiefe men of the Citie, and they raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coastes.
- 51 And they shook off the dust of their feet against them, & came to Iconium.
- 52 And the Disciples were filled with ioy and with the holy Ghost.

46 *When they had taken libertie.* Luke sheweth that the seruants of Christ were so farre from being discouraged with the stubbernesse of the enemies, that they began therefore to inueigh against them a fresh more freely. For though they had sharply pricked them, yet they did yet spare them a little: but now when they see Christ obstinately reiected by them, they excommunicate them and deprive them of the kingdome of God. And by this example are we taught, that wee must not vse extreme seueritie, saue onely against those who are quite past hope. And the more bold the reprobate are to oppresse the truth, the more corage ought we to take to our selues. For the seruants of God must be armed with inuincible constancie of the Spirit, that they may neuer giue place to the diuell nor to his ministers: as the Lord commandeth Ieremie to encounter with the reprobate with a face of yron.

It was necessarie. He accuseth them of vnthankfulnes, because where-as they were chosen by God out of all people, that Christ might offer himself vnto them, they refuse so great a benefit maliciously. And in the former member he setteth downe the degree of honor and excellencie wherunto God had exalted them: afterward followeth the vpbraiding, because they do willingly cast from them so great grace: whereupon he cōcludeth that it is now time that the gospel be translated vnto the gentiles. In that he saith that it was meete that it should first be preached to them, it doth properly appertaine vnto the time of Christ his kingdome. For vnder the Law before Christ was giuen, the Iewes were not only the first, but alone. Therefore was it that Moses called them a priestly kingdome, and the peculiar people of God. But the adoption of God rested then with them alone vpon this condition (the Gentiles being omitted) that they should be preferred as yet before the gentiles by the comming of Christ. For though Christ reconciled the world to his father, yet they were former in order, who were already neere vnto god, & of his family. Therefore that was the most lawful order, that the Apostles should gather the Church first of the Iewes, afterward of the Gentiles, as we saw in the first Chapter and in other places, so that the fellowship of the Gentiles did not take from the Iewes the right of the first begotten, but that they were alwayes the chiefe in the Church of God. In this respect Paul saith, that the righteousness of God is made manifest in the Gospel, first to the Iewes than to the Grecians.

Exo. 19. 5. 6

Actes. 1. 8.

Rom. 1. 16.

Such greatnes of grace which God vouchsafed to bestow vpon them, doth exaggerate and encrease the greatnes of their sin, whiles that they reiect that which is so mercifully offered vnto the. Therefore he addeth that they giue iudgement of themselues, that they are vnworthy of eternal life. For seing that the reiecting of the gospel is the denial of the righteousness of God, we need no other iudge to condemne the vnbeleeuers.

And after that ye reiect. Paul seemeth to reason vnfitly. For first it was not of necessitie that the Iewes should be excluded that the Gentiles might be admitted vnto the hope of saluation: secondly this was more conuenient, that after the Iewes had imbraced the gospel, they shoulde grant the second place to the Gentiles. And Paul speaketh in like sort as if they could not grow togither into one body: and as if the Gospel could not come vnto the Gentiles, vnlesse it were reiectd of the Iewes. And nowē was he not ordained to be the Apostle of the Gentiles before he found such stubbornnes in the Iews? I answere that there is great force in the word *we are turned*. For his meaning is that he is now turned away frō the Iewes, that he may addict & giue ouer himself wholly to the Gentiles. If they had remained in their degree, such turning had not followed, but he shoulde haue drawn the gentiles also with a cōtinual course, after that the Iewes were receiued into the bosom, & he shoulde haue embraced the both togither. Now forasmuch as the Iews turn their backs, & withdraw theselues frō his ministry, he cannot look vpon the & the gentiles both at once. Therefore taking his leaue of them, he is enforced to translate his care vnto the Gentiles. Therefore vnlesse the Iewes had estranged themselues from the Church, the calling of the gentiles shoulde haue bin such as is by the Prophets described: In that day shall seuen strangers take hold of the cloake of a man that is a Iew, & shal say we wil walk with you, because God is with you. But now the gentiles are called after a new & accidental maner: because when the Iewes were reiectd they entred into the emptie possession. They ought to haue bin gathered vnto the Iewes, but after that they sel away & were driuen out, they came in their place. So that their death was the life of the gētiles, & the natural branches being cut off, the wild Oliues were ingrafted into the holy roote: vntil god do at length restore them also vnto life being ingrafted into their former roote, that the Israel of God being gathered togither from all quarters may be saued.

47 *As he hath commanded.* The place is taken out of Iſaias, where notwithstanding god doth rather speak vnto his son then vnto the Apostles. But we must note that many thinges which the scripture attributeth to Christ, do appertain vnto his ministers: I say many thinges, not al thinges. For there be certaine titles proper to the person of Christ, wherewith to adorn the ministers were wicked sacrilege. Christ is called our righteousness: because he was the only purging sacrifice, & hath reconciled the father to vs by his death, & did rise againe afterward, that hauing ouercome death, he might purchase for vs eternal life. Therefore the whole substance of our saluation is in Christs person, but inasmuch as hee worketh by his ministers, by resigning to them his office, he doth also impart with them his titles. Of this sort is the preaching of the Gospel.

He

He alone was appointed by the father to be our teacher: but he hath put in his place Pastours and Doctors, who speake as it were out of his mouth. So that the authoritie remaineth wholly to him, and he is neuertheless heard in his ministers. Therefore Paul doth fitly applie vnto himselfe the testimonie of Isaias, where he intreateth of the preaching of the Gospel.

I haue made thee a light. It should seeme that he speaketh in that place of such a calling of the Gentiles as doth not carry with it the casting off of the old people. For God doeth rather associate strangers vnto the Iewes who were before of the household. It is but a smal matter saith he, that thou be my minister in teaching Israel, because I haue made thee a light to the Gentiles. God doth seeme to begin his Church among the children of Abraham, and that done to reach out his hand to the Gentiles, that they may both make one Church by one consent of faith. But Paul doeth in such sort cite the prophecie, as if it could not be fulfilled, vnles the Iewes had bin cast off. For he signifieth that the light of Christ was lighted to the gentiles, after that they were cast into the darknes of death. I answere that this cannot be necessarily proued out of the text, that Paul doth affirme that the Gentiles could not haue bin illuminate before the light of the Iewes had bin put out. For this may be the sense, Forasmuch as you haue depriued your selues of eternall life, there is no cause why ye should thinke that the grace of God is prophaned, if leauing you we take care & charge of the Gentiles. For the Messias is not giuen to you alone, but he is appointed to be the sauour of al the whole world, as it is written, I haue made thee &c. Although if you weigh the place of the Prophet more throughly, you shal find the casting off of the old people included therein. For God pronounceth that he wil be glorious and renouwed in the ministry of Christ, though Israel be not gathered together. Hee addeth afterward by way of exposition, that the power of Christ shal not be restrained vnto one people only, because his light shal shed abroad his beames vnto the farthest parts of the worlde, vnto saluation. It seemeth that Paul noteth this occasion of calling the Gentiles: namely because seing he found no matter to exercise himselfe in among the Iewes, he gaue himself wholly to the Gentiles. We must note this by the way in the words of the Prophet, that saluation is put after light, according to that saying of Christ, This is eternall life, to know thee the true God, &c. For if the knowledge of God alone, bring to vs saluation, it is likewise the onely resurrection from destruction of eternal death, for vs to be illuminate into the faith of Christ, after that we be deliuered from the darknes of ignorance.

48. *And when the Gentiles heard.* The matter of the Gentiles ioy was this, when they heard, that they were not called to saluation at a fodain as if this had not bin decreed before by God, but that that is now at length fulfilled, which was foretold many yeeres before. For doubleesse it was no smal confirmation of their faith, because saluation was promised to the by the comming of Christ, whereby it did also come to passe, that they did with more earnest desire & reuerence embrace the Gospel. To

John 17.3.

glorifie the word of God may be expounded two maner of waies, either that they did cōfesse that it was true which was prophesied by Iſaias, or that they imbraced the doctrine which was set before them, with faith. Assuredly there is a full subscription noted out, because they dispute or doubt no longer so soone as they saw that Paul had gotten the victorie. And surelie we do then honor the woord of God as we ought, when wee submit our selues obedientlie to it by faith: as it cānot be more grieuouſly blasphemed then when men refuse to beleue it. And here we see how the Gentiles were not hindered by that stubbernesse which they saw in the Iewes, from giuing their name to Christ. With like courage must we despise and tread vnderfoot the pride of the wicked, when by their obstinacie they studie to stop the waie before vs.

And they beleued. This is an exposition of the member next going before, at least in my iudgemēt. For Luke sheweth what maner glorie they gaue to the woord of God. And here we must note the restraint whē he saith that they beleued, but not al in general, but those who were ordeined vnto life. And we need not doubt but that Luk calleth those *retagnans*, who were chosen by the free adoption of God. For it is a ridiculous cauil to refer this vnto the affection of those which beleued, as if those receiued the gospel, whose minds were well disposed. For this ordeining must be vnderstood of the eternal counſel of God alone. Neither dooth Luke saie that they were ordeined vnto faith, but vnto life: because the Lord doth predestinate his vnto the inheritāce of eternal life. And this place teacheth that faith dependeth vpon Gods election. And assuredly ſeing that al the whole rase of mankinde is blinde and stubborne, those diseases sticke fast in our nature vntil they be redressed by the grace of the spirit, and that redressing floweth frō the fountain of election alone. For in that of two which heare the same doctrine together, the one sheweth himselfe apt to be taught, the other continueth in his obstinacie, it is not therefore because they differ by nature: but because God doth lighten the former, and doth not vouchsafe the other the like grace. We are in deed made the children of God by faith: as faith, as touching vs, is the gate and the first beginning of saluation: but there is a higher respect of God. For he dooth not begin to chooſe vs after that we beleue: but he sealeth his adoption which was hidden, in our harts, by the gift of faith, that it may be manifest and sure. For if this be proper to the children of God alone, to be his disciples: it foloweth that it doth not appertein vnto al the children of Adam in general. No mannel therefore, if al do not receiue the Gospel: because though our heauēlie father inuiceth al men vnto the faith by the external voice of man, yet dooth he not cal effectuallie by his spirit anie, saue those whom he hath determined to saue. Now if Gods election wherby he ordeineth vs vnto life be the cause of faith and saluatiō, there remaineth nothing for woorthinesse or merits. Therefore let vs holde and mark that which Luke saith: That those were ordeined before vnto life, who being ingrafted into the bodie of Christ by faith, doo receiue the earnest and pledge of their adoption in Christ. Whence we do also gather, what force the preaching of the Gospel

pel hath of it selfe. For it doth not finde faith in men, saue onlie because God doeth cal those inwardlie whom he hath chosē, and because he draweth those who were his owne before, vnto Christ. Also Luke teacheth in the same words, that it cannot be that anie of the elect should perish. For he saith not that one or a few of the elect did belecue, but so manie as were elect. For though Gods election be vnknownen to vs, vntil we perceiue it by faith: yet is it not doubtfull or in suspense in his secret counsel: because he commendeth all those whom he counteth his to the safegard and tuition of his son, who will continue a faithfull keeper euen vnto the end. Both members are necessarie to be knowne. When Election is placed aboue faith, there is no cause why men shoulde challenge to themselves any thing in any part of their saluation. For if faith wherein consisteth saluation, which is vnto vs a witnesse of the free adoption of God, which coupleth vs to Christ, and maketh his life ours, whereby we possesse God with his righteousnesse, & finally whereby wee receiue the grace of sanctification, be grounded without vs, in the eternal counsell of God: what good things so euer we haue, we must needs acknowledge that we haue receiued it of the grace of God, which doth preuent vs of it owne accorde. Again because manie intangle themselves in doubtfull and thornie imaginations; whiles that they seeke for their saluation in the hidden counsel of God, let vs learne that the election of God is therefore approued by faith, that our minds may be turned vnto Christ, as vnto the pledge of Election, & that they may seeke no other certaintie, saue that which is reuealed to vs in the Gospel: I say, let this seale suffice vs, that whosoeuer belecueth in the onely begotten sonne of God, hath eternall life.

Iohn. 6. 25.
Iohn. 6. 37.

Iohn. 3. 36.

49 *The word of the Lorde was spread abroad.* Luke doth in this place declare the proceeding of the Gospel. Wherein appeareth how true the parable of Christ is, when hee saith that it is like to Leauen. Wee had before that there was greatesse of people, so that the seede of true doctrine was sowne throughout the whole Citie: Luke saith nowe that it was spreade farther: to wit, throughout the whole countrie.

50 Neuerthelesse hee declareth that that was done not without great paines and trouble. Therefore the beginning of the calling of the Gentiles was ioyfull and prosperous, neither coulde Satan hinder the course of the grace of God: but in the meane season, it stood Paul and Barnabas vpon (whom God had brought forth into the field,) to strue. And wee must marke what Luke sayeth, that the religious and honest women together with the chiefe menne of the Citie were enforced to persecute the seruantes of Christ. For this was no small offence to the rude, and those who were as yet scarce begotten in Christe, when they sawe all those menne and women whiche were of anye accounte or estimation sette against Christ, and also whatsoeuer was prayse woorthye according to menne. A greatesse multitude of men receiued Christ, but it was but the multitude and the offscourings of menne. Against them were sette the chiefe menne of the Citie,

who with their pompe did easily oppresse the base and obscure multitude. That might also cause doctrine to be suspected, yea to be hated, in that godly and honest matrons to looke to, were enemies to it. If wicked, vngodly, & mischieuous men should haue issued out of their Tauerne & dens: if companies of whores should breake out of their brothellhouse, it should be no reproch to the gospel: yea rather the dignitie therof should thereby appeare more plainly: but nowe what may the weake thinke with themselves, but that the doctrine which hath such aduersaries is not of God? Therefore it was expedient that not onely the faithfull who were as yet weake should be confirmed by the Lord, least their faith should faile, but also that the hande should be reached out to Paul and Barnabas, least being discouraged they should leane of. And by this example the lord meant to teach vs, that we must valiantly resist such lets, and that we must beware least the vaine visures of vertue do blind our eyes, so, that we cannot see the glorie of Christ which shineth in the Gospel. For it is certaine that all that vertue and honestie which is in men, is meere hypocrisie, where they set themselves against Christ. Though it may be that those who are rashly carried against Christ for a time may afterward repēt. Notwithstanding we must thus think with ourselves, that whatsoeuer faire show of holines those bear, who resist the Gospel: they are neither indewed with the perfect feare of God, neither are they any thing else but a vaine shadowe, howe greatly fouler they boast of their vertue. Neither is it without cause that Christ hath this title giuen him, that hee reuealeth the cogitations of manie hearts.

Luk. 2. 35.

Religious. And what maner religion could that be, where there was no reuerence of the word of God? We must note that there be fewe kinds of men: as there be few which worship God sincerely & from the heart, so there be few who openly profess the manifest and grosse contempt of him. These be two sorts. And the more part is neither quite without religion, neither is it altogether voide of the common worship of God: but yet notwithstanding whiles they do coldly and as it were ouerfields play with God, if they be thoroughly examined, they be but prophane. Like as at this day the vngodlinesse of many is after a sort throwed vnder ceremonies, and the feigned profession of the worship of God. So that in all ages there haue bin certaine worshipers of God who haue worshiped him like stage players, whose holines did whollie consist in gestures and vaine pomps. In Pauls time, euen as at this day, a peculiar studie of godlinesse was to be found in a fewe: whose religion though it were impure, and their heart feigned, deceitful, and double: yet are they counted after a sort religious in respect of their zeale. But hereby appeareth what account we may make of bare religion, which driueth headlong through vnaduised heat the professors thereof, to resist the kingdom of god, & to oppresse his glory. Furthermore it is to be thought that though these matrons had not altogether giuen their name to Iudaisme, neither had they bin noussed in the doctrine of the Law, yet were they halfe Iewesses and that was the cause that they did so willingly take vpon

upon them the defense of the nation. For thus are women led about captiue being loaden with sinnes as Paul witnesseth.

51 *When they had shaken off the dust of their feet.* We may also gather euen by the commaundement of Christ, that this was a token of cursing among the Iewes. For it is not to be thought that Christ meant to haue his vse an vnknown signe: forasmuch as it was his purpose to terrifie the grosse and professed contemners of his doctrine. Furthermore, he meant by this meanes to declare that God doth so detest the wicked, that wee must take great heed, that we haue no fellowship with them: least we be infected with their vncleannesse. All the wicked are said in deed to pollute the ground whereon they tread: but the Lord did neuer command that any saue only the contēners of his word should be so reiectēd with such execration. If any adulterer, or whoremonger, if any periured person, if any drunkard were to be excommunicate, this signe was not vsed. Therefore it appeareth how intollerable the contempt of the worde of God is in his sight: bicause when as he commandeth that the dust of the feet be shaken off, it is as much as if he should pronounce, that they are the bondslaues of Satan, men past hope, and worthie to be banished frō of the earth. Wherefore let this so great seueritie teach vs to reuerence the Gospel. Also the ministers of the word are taught, with howe great feruentnesse of zeale they must maintain the maiestie of the word, that they do not coldly dissemble and wink at the contempt thereof.

Mat. 10. 14.
Luk. 9. 5. &
10. 11.

52 *The disciples were filled with ioy.* This member may be expounded two maner of wayes, that they were filled with ioy and the Spirit, by hypallage thus, with ioy of the Spirit, or (which is al one) with spiritual ioy: because there is no quietnesse, peace, or ioy of conscience, but it cometh of the Spirit of God, in which respect Paul saith that the kingdom of God is rightiuousnesse, peace, and ioy in the Spirit, or that the worde *Spirit*, may containe vnder it other vertues and giftes. Yet this pleaseth me better, that they were filled with ioy: because the grace of the holie Spirit reigned in them: which alone doth so make vs glad truly and perfectly, that we are carried vp aboue all the whole worlde. For wee must marke Luke his drift, that the faithfull were so farre from being troubled and shaken with those stumbling blockes, howe great soeuer they were, with the reproch of their teachers, with the disquieting of the citie, with terrors and threatnings, also with feare and dangers hanging ouer their heads: that they did with the lostinesse of their faith despise valiantlie the gorgeousnesse as well of their faigned holinesse as of their power. And assuredly if our faith shalbe well grounded in god, & shalbe thorowlie rooted in his worde, and finally if it shalbe well fortified with the aide of the Spirit as it ought, it shall nourish peace and ioy spirituall, in our mindes though all the whole world be on an vproare.

Rom. 14. 17.

*The ende of the former booke of the Commentaries
upon the Acts of the Apostles.*

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THE LATTER BOOKE OF THE
Commentaries of M. Iohn Caluin, vpon the
 Acts of the Apostles.

CHAP. XIII.

Or at the
 same time.

1. **A**ND it came so passe at Iconium, that they went together into the Synagogue of the Iewes: & spake so, that a great multitude both of Iewes and Gentiles beleueed.
2. And the Iewes which beleueed not, stirred, and with enuie infected the mindes of the Gentiles against the brethren.
3. Therefore they were long time conuersant there, behauing themselves boldly in the Lord, who bare witnesse of the worde of his grace, granting that signes and wonders might bee done by their hands.
4. And the multitude of the citie was diuided: and some stood with the Iewes, and some with the Apostles.



IN the chapter last going before Luke declared, how Paul and Barnabas took in hand their ambassage vnto the Gētiles. Furthermore it might seeme to bee an vnprosperous and vnluckie beginning, in that they were not only expelled out of Antioch, but also enforced by the obstinate wickednes of certaine to shake off the dust from their feet. But though they had but shorr intertainment in one place, yet do they not yeeld: because they consider that the Lord had called them vpon that condition, that they shuld do their dutie thogh the whole world & Satan, did say nay. Therfore we see that they came not onelic ready to teach, but also armed to enter conflictes, that they might couragiously proceede in publishing the Gospel, euen through the midst of cumbats. And assuredly that which was once spoken to Ieremie, is common to all the prophetes and ministers of God, they shall fight against thee, but they shall not preuaile. Now whither soeuer they flie, they carry with them the same courage still: wherby it appeareth that they were not only furnished for one combat, but euen for continuall warfare: which Luke doth now prosecute. He saith first, that they came to Iconium, and there withall hee sheweth that they sought not there some haueu, where they might rest quietly: but they entered the Synagogue, as if they had suffred no hurt at all. I refer the word *Casa* *ra antio*, forasmuch as it signifieth amōg the Grecians together, or at the same time rather vnto the Iewes than vnto Paul & Barnabas. Therefore I interpret it thus, not that they went in both together, but that they followed the multitude at the soleinne and appointed time of the meeting, whence wee gather that they spake not secretly with a few men, but in a great assembly of people: wherby they declare their boldnesse and redie desire. they are so far from fearing enuie, or auoiding danger.

Tha

That a great multitude beleened. As Luke did before shewe the power of the Spirit in Paul & Barnabas: so now he commendeth another grace of God in that prosperous successe which they had, for one onely sermon which they made, was not without frute, but it brought forth many children of god: as wel of the Iewes as of the Gentiles. If one, or two, or a few, had beleued they might haue rhoght that they sped wel, but the Lorde cōfirmeth the far better, whē as they gather such plentiful frute of their doctrin euen in a short time. For they knew that so many hearts of men were cōuerted to beleue, not so much by their voice, as by the power of the Spirit: whereby they might also assure themselves, that they themselves were defended by the outstretched hand of God: which did not a little encourage them.

2. *And these Iewes which beleened not.* Lo, they are persecuted now afresh; & that by the Iewes. For they were like firebrands to inflame the minds of the Gentiles, For it is to be thought that the Gentiles could abide to heare the gospel preached, vnles they had bin incensed to resist by these fannes. I interpret *cacosai* in this place, for to resist with a malicious affection, or to enforce to do hurt, Vnder the name Brethren, Luke comprehendeth in my iudgement all the godly: to wit, that they were vexed and troubled whosoever imbraced the gospel, as if some pernicious sect had risen to spread discord, to trouble the peace of the citie, to shake the publike state. Yet if any had rather restraine it vnto Paul and Barnabas, I am not greatly against him.

3. *A long time.* Luke declareth here, that Paul & Barnabas did not depart the citie, so soone as they saw some set against them. For when hee saith, that they behaued themselves boldly, he giueth vs an inckling that there was cause of feare offered them. Whence wee gather that they stood stoutly, & that through rare constancie & courage they counted all dangers as nothing, vntill they wer cōpelled by violence to depart to another place. This clause *Epi enio* may be expounded diuersly, either that they behaued themselves stoutly in the Lords cause: or that they trusted to his grace, & were therby encouraged. I haue folowed that which was more cōmen, that they behaued themselves freely & boldly in the Lord, that is, being holpen not by their own strength, but by his grace. He sheweth immediatly after, after what sort they were incōraged in the Lord: to wit, because he approueth the doctrine by signes & myracles. For seeing that they knew thereby, that the Lord was present with them, & that his hand was nigh to help them, they were worthilie pricked forward to behaue themselves stoutly. But in noting one kind, he doth not exclude other kinds. For the Lorde did lift them vppe vnto boldnes, & establish them in constancy by other means. But it seemeth that Luke did speake of myracles expressly, because the Lord shewed in them his power openly before all the people. Therefore Paul & Barnabas were not a little imboldened, when the Lord did so deliuer their doctrine from contempt. Furthermore, we must note this phrase, that the Lord gaue witness to the gospel in myracles, for it sheweth the true vse of miracles. This is indeed the first end, that they may shew to vs the power and grace of God: but, because

because we be wrong & peruers interpreters of them, least they be drawn vnto abuse and corruption, God doth neuer suffer them to be separated from his worde. For if myracles were wrought at any time without his worde, first that was very seldome: secondly there came but smal fruite therof. And God hath wrought myracles for the most part, whereby the worlde might know him not simply or in his bare maiestie, but in his worde. So Luke saith in this place that the Gospel was established by myracles, not that some confused religion might possesse the mindes of men, but that Paul his doctrine going before, they might be brought vnto the pure worship of God: when ce we may easily gather, how foolishely the Papists deale, when as they indeuour to lead away the world from the reuerence of God and the gospel by bare myracles. For wee must hold that principle, that those myracles which came from God at anye time did neuer tend to any other end, but that the gospel might haue his perfect and full authoritie.

Now must we see whether the Gospel commaund vs to call vpon the dead: to burne incense to idols: to translate vnto sained Saints the grace of Christ: to take in hand vowed pilgrimages: to inuent profane worshipings, wherof there is no mention made in the word of God. But there is nothing more contrary to the Gospell, then that these superstitions should take place. Whereupon it followeth that the Papists do wickedly make engines of the shoares of the gospel to oppugne it. To the same end tendeth that which Luke saith, that the Lord graunted that by the handes of his seruants myracles might be done: in which words he teacheth that those were only ministers, who obeyed God: and that he was the authour, who vsed their hand and industrie. Wherefore in speaking properly we cannot say that they were Paul and Barnabas his myracles: but the myracles of God alone, who doth so worke by men, that hee will not haue his glory darkened by their ministerie. Furthermore, wee must note the title of the Gospell, which Luke putteth in here, that it may be made to vs more amiable. For in calling it the worde of grace, it hath a most pleasant tast: because saluation is offered to the world in it through Christ, and we must vnderstand the contrarietie with the law, wherein only the curse is set before vs. Therefore let vs remember that God speaketh to vs in the Gospel to this end, that he may reconcile himself to vs, and may testifie that he is mercifull to vs. Neither doth this hinder that it is the sauour of death vnto death to the reprobate: because they chaunge not the nature thereof by their fault. Reade those thinges which we haue spoken in the second Chapter touching signes and wonders.

2. Cor. 2. 16

4 *The multitude was diuided.* The most troublesome part of the tragedie followeth now, for the citie is diuided into two partes: & at length Paul and Barnabas (being enforced by the vpror of the people) depart vnto an other place. If it be demanded what was the originall of the discord, assuredly it flowed from the Gospell: to which notwithstanding there is nothing more contrary then to cause discord. But the frowardnesse of men causeth that the gospel which ought to be the bond of vni-
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tie is, (so soone as it cometh abroad) the occasion of tumults. Wherefore so soone as any scisme ariseth before we condemne those who seeme to be the authours, it behoueth vs wisely to consider who ought to bear the blame. Wee heare heere that one citie was diuided, whereby some were brought vnto Christ. The Spirit of God pronounceth this to the praise, and not to the shame of Paul and Barnabas. The same rule must we obserue at this day, least the Gospell bee burdened with false enuie, if it bring not men together vnto God, but the wicked rage against it. It is assuredly a miserable matter to see diuision among men. But as the vni- tie is accursed which doth separate vs all from God: so it were better that a few should depart an hundred times from all the whole worlde, and in the meane season come in fauour againe with G O D, then that disagreeing with him continually, they shoulde haue peace with the worlde.

- 5 And when there was an assault made of the Gentiles & Iewes together with their rulers, to doe them violence, and to stone them:
- 9 When they knewe the matter, they fled into cities of Lycaonia, to Lystra and Derbe, & to the countrie lying nigh there about on euery side:
- 7 And there they preached the Gospel:
- 8 And there sate a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, who had bin lame from his mothers wombe, neither had he ever walked.
- 9 This man heard Paul speake: who beholding him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed.
- 10 Said with a loud voice, Arise vp right vpon thy feet. And he leapt vp and walked.

5 Marke how far forth the holy chāpions of Christ did suffer. They giue not backe when their enemies doe only set themselues against the: but when the, sedition waxeth whot, and they be in danger of stoning: though they haue many fauourers of their doctrine, they go no further: but remembring the saying of Christ, wherein he warneth the faithfull in patience to possesse their soules, they auoide the furie of the enemie. And though they flie, least they throw themselues headlong into death: yet their constancie in preaching the gospel, doeth sufficiently declare that they feared not danger. For Luke saith that they preached the gospel in other places also. This is the right kinde of feare when the seruants of Christ do not runne wilfully into the hands of their enemies, of them to be murdered, and yet they doe not forslow their dutie: neither doth feare hinder them from obeying God when he calleth: and so cōsequently they can asoord if need be to go euen through death it self to doe their dutie.

8 A certaine man at Lystra. Luke reciteth one myracle, which wee may thinke was one of manie: but there was mention made of it alone by reason of the famous euent. For wee shall see by and by what happened. Luke reckoneth vp the circumstances, which doe more plainelie set forth the power of God, when he saith that the man did neuer walk,
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and that he was a creeple euen from his mothers wombe, and that hee was sodainly healed by the voice of Paule alone, before the eyes of all men, and that his legs which were dead were made nimble, so that hee leapt vp without making any stop.

9 *He heard Paul speake.* Hearing is set down first, that we may know that the faith which Luke will commend by and by, was conceiued of Paul his doctrine. Therefore when he heard Paul, he hoped to bee healed. But the question is, whether this was promised to him specially: for God doth not commaund vs to hope for euery thing by and by, when he offereth vnto vs eternall saluation in the Gospel. I answere, that this was a singular and extraordinarie motion of the Spirite of God in the creeple, as it was on the other side in Paul, when he knew his faith by beholding him only. It may be that many may receiue the Gospel: and yet they shall not be cured of those diseases wherewith they are vexed. But forasmuch as God was determined to shewe a token of his grace in the creeple, he prepared his mind before, and made him capable of this that should come vpon him. Wherefore wee must not make this a common rule, because the creeple beleued that he should be healed, but it was a peculiar preparation to receiue the gift of healing. And this kind of faith is likewise particular, which giueth place to myracles, which many of Gods children do want, who are notwithstanding indued with the Spirit of adoption.

Whom when Paul beheld stedfastly. Wee know howe doubtfull and how deceitfull a thing the countenance of man is, therefore there could be no sure iudgement be giuen thereby of faith, which hath God alone to bee witness thereof: but as I haue alreadie said, the creeples faith was reuelled to Paul by the secret inspiration of the Spirit: as he was to the Apostles their only guide and master to worke myracles.

10 *He said with a loud voice.* Many oid bookes, and those of great credite, adde, I say to thee in the name of Iesus Christ, & surely we see how careful the Apostles were to magnifie the name of Christe in all myracles: therefore I thinke that that was expressed by Luke, and yet we can not finde it commonly now in the printed bookes. Whereas Luke saith afterward that the lame man leapt vp, it serueth not only for the commendation of gods power: but also such readinesse and willingnesse to obey, did testifie that he was rightly prepared by the Lord: so that hee did alreadie walk in mind, when as his feete were as yet dead. Although his speed in rising made the power of God more manifest, to which end also Paul exalted his voice, that the sodaine chaunge might the more moue the multitude.

11 *Furthermore when the multitude had seen what Paul had doone, they lifted vp their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, Gods being made like to men are come downe to vs.*

12 *And they called Barnabas Iupiter: and Paul Mercurie, because hee was the captaine of the speech.*

13 *And Iupiters priest, which was before their citie, bringing Bulles & crownes vnto the gates, would haue done sacrifice with the multitude.*

11 *Furthermore, the multitude.* This historie doth abundantly testifie how readie & bent men are vnto vanitie. Paul vttered not that word abruptly, arise: but he added it as it wer a conclusion to the sermon made concerning Christ. Yet the people ascribe the praise of the myracle vnto their idols, as if they had heard no word of Christ. In deede it is no such wonder, that the barbarous men fell vnto superstition, whiche they had learned from their childhood, so soone as they saw the myracle. But this vice is too common euery where, & it is so bred in vs, to bee peruers and wrong interpreters of the works of god. Hence com such grosse dotings of superstitiōs in poperie, because catching rashly at myracles, they take no heed to doctrine. For which cause we must take the better heed, & be the more sober, least wee happen with the sense of the fleshe to corrupt (wherunto we are so bent) the power of god, which shineth & appeareth to vs for our saluation. And no maruel if the Lord would haue only a few myracles wrought, & that for a short time: least through the lust of men they should be drawne vnto a far contrary end: because it is vnmeet that he should set his name to be mocked of the world: which must needs be, when that which is proper to him is translated vnto Idols, or the vnbelieuers corrupt his works, to inuent corrupt worshipping: while that setting the word aside, they catch at euery diuine power which they feigne.

Gods like to men. This was an opinion drawne from old fables, which notwithstanding tooke the beginning of truth. The bookes of the poets are full of these toyes, that the gods were often seen vpon earth in the likenes of men: and yet we may well think that this came not of nothing: but rather that profane men did turn that into fables, which the holy fathers taught in times past concerning angels. And it may be that Satan, when he had men besotted, did with diuers iuglings, delude the. This is of a truth; whatsoeuer was gods, whensoeuer it went with the infidels, it was corrupt by their wicked inuentiōs. The same must we likewise think of sacrifices, wherin God did exercise his euen from the beginning, that they might haue externall signes of godlines & of the worship of God. And after that the vnbelieuers inuented to theselues strange gods, they abused the sacrifices vnto their sacrilegious worship. When the men of Lycaonia see vnwonted power in the creeple that was healed, they perswade themselves that it is a work of god: this is all wel. But it was euill done, in that they forge to theselues false gods in Paul & Barnabas, according to the old error. For what is the cause that they prefer Barnabas before Paul, saue only because they folow the childish surmise cōcerning Mercurie the interpreter of the gods, in which they had byn nourished. By which exāple we are taught what a mischief it is to be accustomed & acquainted with errors in youth: which can so hardly be rooted out of the mind, that euen through the workes of God, whereby they ought to haue been redressed, they waxe more hard.

13 *Also Iupiters priest.* Though Luke doe not expresse with what affection he was moued to be so diligent, yet it is to be thought, that, forasmuch as ther was great hope of most plentiful gain offered, he was moued with coueteousnes. For he had great hope of gain in time to come, if it should be noised abroad, that Iupiter appered ther. For this opiniō wold
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by & by haue followed, that Iupiter was more delited in the temple of Lystra then in any other. And so soone as such superstition hath once filled the mindes of men, they spare no cost to offer sacrifice. The world is in deed of it selfe inclined to this; but then came the sacrificing priestes, who are like fannes & bellowes. And it is not to be doubted, but that the whole multitude was moued with ambition, to be so desirous to offer sacrifice to Paul vnder the name of Iupiter, that their citie might bee the more famous and noble. Hence hath Satan so great libertie to deceiue, whiles that the sacrificing priestes set nets to get gaine, and the people are delighted to haue errors confirmed.

14 Furthermore, when the Apostles Barnabas and Paul had hearde, renting their garments, they ran in into the prease, crying:

15 And saying, Men, why doe yee these things? Wee be also men subiect to like miseries as you are, preaching to you that you turne from those vaine thinges vnto the liuing God, who hath made heauen and earth, and the sea, and whatsoever are in them.

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walke in their owne wayes.

17 Though he left not him selfe without witnesse doing good, giuing to vs from heauen rayne and fruitefull times, replenishing with fooode and gladnesse our heartes.

18 And when they had thus said, they scarce appeased the multitude, that they should doe sacrifice to them.

14 When the Apostles had heard. In that Paul and Barnabas rent their garments and leap into the midst of the multitude, it appeareth thereby howe zealous they were for the glorie of God: beeing content onlie to speak to the people, they troubled the preparatiō of the sacrifice so much as they are able. It commeth to passe sometimes that euen hypocrites refuse excessiue honor: but they rather prouoke the simple to giue it them, with their feigned modestie. There was no such thing in Paul and Barnabas. For they declared both by wordes and also by all gesture of body, that they were so farre from taking pleasure in that worship which the men of Lystra gaue vnto them, that they did vtterly detest it. This is holy anger, wherewith the seruantes of God must be inflamed, so often as they see his glory profaned and ouerthrowen by the sacrileges of men. And assuredly no man shall be able otherwise to serue God sincerely and faithfully, vnlesse he put on that affection of ielousie, wherof Paul speaketh in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that those men to whom the Lord hath committed the charge of his church be no lesse courageous and stout to defend the glory of their Lord, then a husband is vigilant to defend his wiues chastitie. Therefore we must take good heede, that we suffer not that honour to be giuen vs, which may darkē the glorie of God: but rather so soone as there appeareth any profaning of gods glory, let this heat breake out, wherof we haue an example in Paul and Barnabas. And though the teachers of the church ought especially to be indued with this zeale, yet there is no one of the godly, which ought

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not to be sore displeased, when he seeth the worship of God polluted, or giuen to some other: because it is written of all, The zeale of thine house hath eaten me vp, and the rebukes of them that rebuked thee fell on me. *Psal. 69. 10.* And if so be it holy men being yet compassed about with the flesh did so greatly detest idolatrie, how shall we think thē to be affected now, when they are stripped out of all the affections of the flesh? When as the world abuseth their names and persons vnto superstition, it thinketh it doeth them a great pleasure: but it is greatly deceiued. For they will stande vp first against their worshippers, and will in deed declare that they neuer make more account of any thing, then that the worship of God might remaine whole and sound to him. Moreouer, there can bee no greater iniurie done to them, then when the honor which is taken from God is giuen to them: which must needes be when any diuine thing is ascribed and giuen them. Whereas Luke saith, that Paul and Barnabas did rent their garments, it appeareth by other places of scripture, that this rite & custome was vsed among the men of the East countrie, so often as they would by externall gesture expresse eirher great sorrow, or detesting of any thing. When Luke calleth Barnabas an apostle together with Paul, he extendeth the signification of the word far ther then vnto the chiefe order which Christ appointed in his Church: like as Paul maketh Andronicus and Iunias excellent among the Apostles. But if wee shoulde speake properly they were Euangelistes and not Apostles: vnlesse peraduenture because Barnabas was made Paul his fellowe in office, wee place them both in like degree of office, so may hee be truly called an Apostle.

15 *Men why doe yee those things.* They begin with a reprehension, as the matter did require: that done, they shew to what end they were sent. Afterward they preach concerning the only God, and shew that he was vnknown to the world. Lastly, that they may more strongly pluck out of their hearts the deceites and sleights of the Diuell, they teach that this ignorance was without excuse. Therefore the first part of the sermon is a reprehension, wherein the men of Lystra are condemned, for worshipping mortall men preposterously in steed of God. Though the reason which they alleage seemeth to be colde. For it were an easie matter to gather thence, that it is not vnlawfull to worship those who are deliuered frō humane miseries by death. By this meanes al the superstitions of the Gentiles should stand vntouched which wer wont to count none gods but those who were dead. With the same colour also haue the Papists colored their idolatrie, who worship rather the dead mens bones, stones and wood, then liuing men in whose nose thrilles is breath. I answer: that Paul and Barnabas drewe this argument from the matter which was now in hand, We be miserable men: therefore you dō sadly and filthily imagine vs to be Gods, & worship vs as gods. If Idolatrie bee handled generally, this shalbe a perpetual reason to condemne it, & shall alone bee sufficient enough, that the perfect and whole worship of godlines is due to god alone, & that therefore it is profaned, so soone as it is in any point giuen to creatures, whether they be angels, or men, or stars.

But occasion shall oftentimes be offered, that many things may bee spoken against one kind of Idolatrie, which do not appertaine vnto another neither are agreeable to the same: and yet shall they bee of no small force for the matter which is in hand, as Paul and Barnabas, by confessing that they be mortall men, subiect to diuers calamities, had a fit reason to reprove the furie and madnesse of the people.

We preach to you. An argument drawn from contraries. For heere they shew that the end of their coming was quite contrary: to wit, that they might remoue superstitions, which had hitherto reigned. For it is all one as if they had said, Doth the myracle moue you? Then giue credence to our wordes. And the summe of our ambassage is, that al feined Godheads, wherewith the world hath hitherto been deceiued, may be done away & perish. And this is a general doctrine, wherby they do not only appease the present madnes, but also reprehend all maner superstitions, and whatsoeuer was contrary to; or disagreeing with the rule of godlinesse. For without doubt they call all that vaine which men haue inuented to themselves of their owne brain, And we must mark this definition, that all religion is vaine, which departeth and degenerateth from the pure and simple worde of God. There is no expresse mention made in deed of the worde, because they spake to the Gentiles. But because God is no otherwise rightly worshipped, then according to his appointment, it followeth out of Paul his words, that so sone as mé depart from that worship which God hath commaunded and doth allow, they are wearied foolishly and vainely, with a vaine and vnprofitable labour. For that religion wherin God hath not the preheminance is nothing worth, nether hath it any truth or soundnes. And this was the cause, that sincere and perfect godlines was neuer found, neither did it euer flourish in the more part of the world. For they stood only about the remouing of the old Idolatrie: and the other thing was in the meane season foreflowed, to bring men vnto the true God alone, after that they had forsaken Idols. They turned in deed the name of an Idol sometimes, into the name of God: but vnder that colour they did neuerthelesse cherish the old errors, which they should haue indeuoured to redresse. So the priests of Fraunce begat the single life of great Cybele. Nunnes came in place of the vestall virgins. The church of al Saints succeeded Pantheo, or the church of all Gods: against ceremonies were set Ceremonies not much vnlike. At length came in the multitude of gods, who they thought would be lawfull and tollerable if they had once decked them with the titles of Saints. Corruptions are not by this meanes purged, neither are the stables both profane and ful of filth turned into the temple of God: but the name of God is mixed with profane pollutions, and God himselfe is brought into a filthie stall. Wherefore let vs remember that the apostles did not only employ themselves to ouerthrow Idolatrie which had long time reigned in former ages: but did also take great heed that pure religion might reigne afterward, hauing put all corruptions to flight.

Who hath made heauen and earth. We know that the order of teaching doth require that we begin with things which are better known. Seing that

that Paul and Barnabas spake to the Gentiles, they should haue in vain assayed to bring them vnto Christ. Therefore it was expedient for them to begin with som other point, which was not so far separate from common sense, that after that was confessed, they might afterwarde passe ouer vnto Christ. The minds of the men of Lystra wer possessed with that errour, that there bee more gods then one. Paul & Barnabas shew on the contrary, that there is but one Creator of the world. After that, that feined number and multitude of the Gods was taken away, there was passage nowe made vnto the second member, that they might teach what that god was, who was the Creator of heauē & earth. The case stādeth otherwise at this day betweene vs and the papistes, they confesse that there is but one God, and they admit the scripture. Therefore it remaineth that we proue to thē out of the scripture what God is, & after what sort he wil be worshipped of men.

16 *In times past.* Because the men of Lystra might obiekt that that god was vnknownen, hitherto Paul and Barnabas preuent them and say, that all men wandered indeed in darknesse, and that all mankinde was stricken with blindnesse, but that they denie that any prejudice must be made according to the peruers ignorance of the worlde. These were two no small lets for the vnbeleeuers, long antiquitie of time, and the consent almost of all nations. Paul and Barnabas remoue both in this place: If, say they, men haue erred many yeeres, & if the world haue wandered without reason & iudgement, let not therefore the truth of God when it appeareth bee lesse precious to you. For seeing that it is eternal and is not chaunged, it is an vnmeete thing that the long prescription of yeeres should be set against it. They proue that there is no more aide or patronage to be found in the number of men. There is no cause (say they) why the conspiracie of all the whol world should keep you frō cōming to the right way. Blindnesse hath got the vpper hande among all people: but god doeth nowe appeare and giue light to you. Therefore your eyes muste bee open, and you muste not slumber and sleepe in darkenes, though all people haue beene drowned therein hyther-to.

Their waies. If hee had onely saide that men were deceiued vntill that time through gods sufferance, we might easily gather thereby, that all men can doe nothing els but erre, so long as they be not gouerned of god. Yet hee speaketh far more plainly, when hee calleth errours the wayes of men. For we are plainly taught by this, what the wisdom and vnderstanding of mans mind can doe in beholding and keeping the way of saluation. All people (saith he) haue walked in their owne wayes, that is, they haue wandered in darknesse and death: it is all one as if hee shoulde say that there is no sparkle of true reason in all the whole world.

Therefore there is but one rule of true godlines, that is, that the faithful, casting frō thē al confidence in their own wit, do submit thēselues to god. For the waies of mē are now, as thei wer in times past: & the exāples

of all times teach how miserable blind those men be, who haue not the worde of God to giue them light, though they thinke they can passe o-ther men in quicknesse of sight. Immediately after the Beginning of the world, the more part fell away vnto diuers superstitions and wicked wor-shippings: whence came that? Saue only because it pleased them to fol-low their own imaginations? Whē it might haue seemed that the world was purged with the flood, it fell againe streightway to the same vices. Therefore there is nothing more deadly then to leane to our owne wis-dome. But Paul and Barnabas shew no cause here why the Lord suffred the worlde to erre so long: and assuredly wee must count the will of god alone, the chiefeest law of equity. God hath alwaies a good reason for his workes: but because it is oftentimes hid from vs, it is our dutie reuerent-ly to wonder at his secrete counsell: wee must in deed confesse, that the world was worthie of such destruction: but there can no other reason be brought why the Lord had mercy rather on one age then on another, saue only because it seemed good to him that it should bee so. Therefore Paul calleth that time which was appointed of God for preaching the gospel, the time of fulnes, least any other opportunitie be sought And we must remember that which we had in the first chapter, that it is not for vs to know the times & seasons, which the father hath placed in his own power. So that the cauill of the papistes is refuted, who say that it canot be that God suffered his church to erre so long. For whence I pray you came the Gentiles but from the Ark of Noe, when there was a certaine singular puritie of the church? Also the posteritie of holy Sem together with others did degenerate. Yea Israel the peculiar people of the Lorde was also left for a long time. Wherefore it is no maruel, if God did punish the contempt of his word with the same blindness vnder the reigne of his sonne, as he did in times past.

17 *Notwithstanding he did not suffer himself to be without witnes.* Paul and Barnabas take from the Gentiles in this place the cloake of ignorance. For how greatly loeuer men please themselves in their own inuentions, beeing at length conuict of error, they flie vnto this soffre, that they ought to beare no blame: but that God was rather cruel, who did not vouchsafe so much as with one hisse to call those back whom he saw pe-rish. Paul & Barnabas cut off this friuolous obiection when they shewe that God lay hid in such sort, that he bare witnesse of himselfe and his diuinitie. Notwithstanding wee must see how these two things can hang together: for if God bare witnesse of himselfe, he did not suffer (so much as in him lay) the worlde to erre. I answere, that this kinde of testimony, wherof mention is made, was such, as that it made men without excuse, and yet was it not sufficient to saluation. For that of the apostle is true, that by faith it is vnderstood that the worlds were ordeined by the word of God, but faith is not conceiued by the bare beholding of the heauen, and earth, but by the hearing of the worde. Whereuppon it followeth that men are brought by the direction of the woorde alone vnto that knowledge of Almighty GOD which bringeth saluation. And yet this letteth not but that they may bee made without excuse, euen with-

Gal. 4. 4.

Gen. 9. 9.

Heb. 11. 3.

without the worde, who though they be naturally deprivied of light, are blinde notwithstanding through their owne malice, as Paul teacheth in the first chapter to the Romanes.

Giving vaine and fruitfull seasons. God hath indeed revealed himself to all mankind by his word since the beginning. But Paul & Barnabas shew that there was no age, on which God did not bestowe benefites, which might testifie, that the world is governed by his government, and commandement: and because the light of doctrine had byn buried long time, therefore they say only, that God was shewed by natural arguments. And it is to be thought, that they did in such sort set forth the magnificence & greatnes of the works of God as became them: but it was sufficient for Luke to touch the summes & chief points of matters. Neither do I so understand it that they intreated subtilly and after the manner of the philosophers of the secrets of nature, for they spake vnto an vnlearned multitude: therefore it behoued them to set that before them plainly, which the most ignorant did know. Notwithstanding they take this principle, that in the order of nature there is a certaine and euident manifestation of godin that the earth is watered with raine, in that the heat of the Sun doth comfort it; in that there cometh such abundance of fruit out of the same yeerely, it is thereby gathered for a suretie that there is some God who governeth all things. For euen the heauen and earth are not moued or governed by their own motion: & much lesse by fortune. Therefore it remaineth, that this wonderful workmanship of nature doth manifestly shew the prouidence of God: and those who said that the worlde was eternal, spake not as they thought, but they went about by malicious and barbarous vnthankfulnesse to suppressie the glory of god: wherein they bewrayed their impudencie.

Filling with meat and gladnesse. The vngodlinesse of men is more conuict in that, if they knew not God, because hee doeth not only set before their eyes, testimonies of his glory in his workes: but doth also appoint all things for their vse. For why doth the Sun & starres shine in the heauens, saue only that they may serue men? Why doth the raine fall from heauen? Why doth the earth bring forth her increase, saue onely that they may minister food to men? Therefore God hath not set man vpon earth, that he may be an idle beholder of his workes as being set vpon a Theater, but to exercise himself in praising the liberalitie of God, whiles that he enioyeth the riches of heauen & earth. And now, is it not more than filthy frowardnesse, not to be moued with so great goodnes of god in the manifold abundance of thinges? To fill the hearts with meat doth signifie nothing els but to giue foode, which may satisfie the desires of men. By this word *gladnes* Paul and Barnabas do meane that God doth giue more to men according to his infinite goodnesse, then their necessitie doth require: as if it had been saide, that men haue meate giuen them not only to refresh their strength, but also to make their harts merrie. If any man do obiekt that it falleth out so oftentimes, that men doe rather mourne being hungrie, then reioyce beeing full. I aunswere, that that commeth to passe contrarie to the order of nature: namely, when

the Lorde shutteth his hand because of the sinnes of men. For the liberalitie of God should flow vnto vs abundantly of his owne accorde, as it is heere described by Paul, and Barnabas, vnlesse it were kept backe by the lets of our vices. And yet there wes neuer so great barrennes, wherein the blessing of God in feeding men did quite wither away. It was indeed well said of the Prophet, Open thy mouth, and I will fill it, that wee may know that we be hungrie through our owne fault, whiles that wee doe not admit the goodnes of God. But how vnworthie fouer we be & streight, yet the fatherly loue of God breaketh through euen vnto the vnworthie. Especially the generalitie of mankind doth testifie that the benefites of God doe neuer cease, wherein he appeareth to be our father.

Psal. 81. 11.

18 *When they had said thus.* Luke said before that they did not onely vse wordes, but they ran also with violence into the multitude. Nowe hee addeth that the furie of the people was scarce appeased with that vehemencie, whereby appeareth howe mad & vnramed the heat of the world is towards Idolatrie. For if they belecue the gods, why doe they not belecue their wordes, whereby they put from them false honour? But all idolaters are sicke of this disease, that they are oftentimes readie to shake off the yoke, vnlesse religion bee subiect to their will and pleasure. Wherefore no maruel if the prophets say oftentimes, that men are carried into the blinde affection of superstitions, euen as brute beastes are carried into their lust.

19 *And there came from Antioch and Iconium Iewes, by whom the multitudes were perswaded, and when they had stoned Paul, they cast him out without the citie thinking that he was dead.*

20 *And as the Disciples stood about him he rose, and entered into the citie: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.*

21 *And when they had preached the gospel to this citie, and had framed many disciples, they returned to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch.*

22 *Strengthening the soules of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through manie afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heauen.*

19 *There came.* Paul and Barnabas can hardly stay the people from doing sacrifice: but a companie of knaues doe with small adoe perswade them to stone Paul whom of late they made a God. Whereby appeareth how much more men be bent vnto superstition, then vnto the true worship of God, & how arrogant superstition is, which will alwaies beare the chief sway in appointing the worship of god. The seruants of god seek no other thing, but to bring men vnder obedience of him, which is saluation and felicitie alone. They challenge to themselves no Lordship, they hunt after no gaine: and yet the world cannot abide them. For almoste all men murmure: and now and then there rise tumults. Those who are thus stubborn against God, they be too so readie to belecue seducers, & willingly

willingly submit themselves to their tyrannie. So the Pope had libertie to deceiue at his pleasure, and not onely to oppress miserable soules with slauerie, but also cruelly to torment them. Whatsoeuer hee commaunded it was obediently receiued, and euen at this day, though he make vnpossible lawes, yet dare no man once mutter against them. Neuerthelesse the yoke of Christ is sweet, and yet few there be who will suffer it.

Mat. 11. 30.

Therefore in this historie is most liuely painted out vnto vs the forwardnesse of the worlde. Paule might haue reigned vnder the title of Mercurie, with the commendation of all men: he will not be a God. Because he serueth Christe faithfully, he is stoned. His constancie is commended, to the end we may follow it. He was in deed wonderfully deliuered by the Lorde: but as touching himselfe he suffered a most cruell kinde of death. Therefore we must make like account of this testimony, which he doth also recite in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, as if he had been slaine. Furthermore, we need not doubt but that the common sort made insurrection against him outragiously. So that what violence soeuer the wicked doe to the seruants of Christ, it is neuer called in question: the lawes are whist, iudgements cease; the magistrate is asleep: there is no patron to be found.

2. Cor. 12.
65.

20 *As the disciples.* Though no man defended Paul, yet Luke sheweth that the godly were desirous of his life: yet they did so moderate themselves, least they should attempt any thing with great danger to no end, seeing they could not helpe him vnlesse it were done priuilie. And surely we must alwayes marke what the Lord hath brought to our hand. If I standing vpon the banke shall see a man in the midst of the water, and cannot reache him my hande when hee is like to be drowned: what is remaining for me to do, but to commend him to the Lorde? And if there bee any hope to help him, then must I indanger my selfe. Therefore wee will not say that Saint Paul was left alone by the Disciples through slouth: seeing they coulde not helpe him. And they declare their loue and care, when they stande about him after hee is cast out.

They went to Derbe. It appeareth plainly by this that Paul was misericordiously saued, seeing that on the morrowe after hee was cast out for dead, he taketh his journey being fresh & sound, whence it is also gathered what an inuincible heart he bare against all euils & afflictions. For he creepeth not into a corner, where like an ouerworn souldiar he may liue idly: but he goeth to the same places, where he was vncourteously and cruelly handled but a little before. Notwithstanding Luke sheweth that the church was first planted among the men of Derbe, hee addeth afterward that Paul & Barnabas returned vnto the Churches, which they had ordained, that they might confirme the Disciples. Whereby hee giueth vs to vnderstand that the vse of the worde consisteth not in instruction only, whereby the hearer is only taught: but that it is also auailable for confirmation of faith in admonishing, exhorting & reproving.

4.Tim.3.16

And Christ doth not only commaund his ministers to teach, but also to exhort: and Paul saith that the scripture is profitable, not only to teach, but also to exhort. Wherefore let not Pastours thinke that they haue done their dutie as they ought, when they haue well trained vp the people in true knowledge, vnlesse they employ themselues to this part also. Againe, let not the faithfull neglect the woordes of God as if the reading and preaching thereof were vnnesseary: because there is no man who hath not need of continuall confirmation.

And exhorting them. This was the principall way to confirme, in that they prouoke the disciples who had before embraced the Gospel and did professe it, to goe forward, by exhorting them. For wee are farre from being so readie and stout as we ought. Therefore our lasinesse needeth prick, and our coldnesse must bee warmed. But because GOD will haue his exercised with diuers cumbates, Paul and Barnabas admonishe the disciples to be readie to suffer tribulation. A very necessary admonition, that we must goe on warrefare in this worlde that wee may liue well and godly. If the flesh should not molest vs, if Satan shoulde attempt nothing, if the wicked shoulde not trouble vs with some stumbling blocks, it were no such troublesome thing to perseuere: because that were a sweete walke through a soft and pleasant way: but because there arise on euery side, and euery minute of an houre, infinite assaults which prouoke vs to fal away, there ariseth the hardnesse, and therefore is it that the vertue of constancie is so rare. Therefore to the ende wee may persist euen vnto the end, we must be prepared for warre. But Luke speaketh not in this place only of the persecutions which the aduersaries raise against vs with drawen swordes, and flaming fires: but he comprehendeth vnder the worde *tribulations* all sorrowes & miseries, whereunto the life of the godly is subiect, not because the faithfull alone are miserable: because this is the common state both of good and badde. Whence also commeth that famous prouerbe, It is the best, not to bee borne: and the next, to die very quickly. But when as God doth oftentimes spare the wicked, and doth fat them with prosperitie: hee is more sharpe and harde toward his children. For besides common molestations, they are oppressed peculiarly with many discommodities, and the Lorde doth humble them with such exercises, keeping their flesh vnder correction least it wax wanton: he awaketh them, least they lie sleeping vpon earth. Vnto these are added the reproches and slanders of the wicked: for they must be as it were the ofscourings of the world. Their simplenes is laughed at: but they vse wicked mocks and scofs principally against God. Last of all, the lust of the wicked breaketh out into open violence. So that they haue need to striue with manie tribulations, and it cannot bee but that all their life shall bee inuiet and vnquiet amidst so many enemies. But this is the best comforte, and which is sufficient enough to confirme their mindes, that, this way (though it bee harde and sharpe,) leadeth vnto the kingdome of heauen.

For wee gather by this, that the miseries of the godly are more happie
then

then be all the doting dainties and delights of the world. Therefore let vs remember, first, that this condition is let downe for vs; that wee suffer many tribulations: yet let vs also remember to adde this, to mitigate the bitternes thereof, that by them we be brought vnto the kingdome of God. Furthermore their babling is friuolous, who gather hereby that patience is a work which deserueth eternal saluatiō, seing that the cause of saluation is not in this place handled: but after what sort God vseth to handle his in this world: and the comfort is added, not to extoll the dignitie and merite of workes, but onely to encourage the godly that they faint not vnder the burthen of the crosse. All mankind as we haue saide before, as well one as other, is subiect to manie miseries. But the afflictions of the reprobate are nothing else to them but the verie entrie of hell: but these turne to the saints to an happie and ioyfull end, and for them they fall out well, and so consequently they bee helpees for saluation, because they take part with Christ. We must note that Paule and Barnabas being not content with the plurall number, doe plainly set downe Many tribulations, least any man after he hath suffered one or two or a few, doe at length sinke downe. Therefore let the faithfull thinke that they must passe through continuall miseries: that done, let them prepare themselues not for one kind of persecution onely, but for diuerse kindes. For though God handle some men more courtiously and gently: yet doth he pamper none of his so daintily, that he is free from all tribulations.

- 23 And when by voices they had ordained them Elders through all Churches, hauing prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had beleued.
- 24 And passing ouer through Pisidia, they came to Pamphilia.
- 25 And when they had spoken the worde at Perga, they went downe to Asialia.
- 26 And thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they were commended to the grace of God, vnto the worke which they had fulfilled.
- 27 And when they were come, when the Church was gathered together, they shewed what great things God had done by them, and that he had opened to the Gentiles the doore of faith.
- 28 And they were there no small time with the disciples.

23 When they had ordained Elders. By this it appeareth sufficiently, that it is not ynough if men haue bin once taught the doctrine of godlinesse, and to haue the summe of faith, vnlesse they go forward continually. Therefore Christ did not onely send his Apostles to preach the gospel, but he commanded also that there should be Pastours appointed that the preaching of the Gospel might be perpetuall and in daily vse. Paul and Barnabas do maake that this order was set downe by Christ, when they assigned Pastours to euerie Church, least after their departure doctrine should cease and be whisht. Furthermore this place teacheth that the Church cannot want an ordinarie ministerie: neither can
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1. Tim. 5. 17.

any be counted christians before God, but those who during their whole life are willing to learne, I take it that those are called Elders in this place, who had the office of teaching inioyned them. For it appeareth by Paul that some were onely Censors of manners and such as had authoritie to punish enormities. Now forasmuch as Luke saith, that they were set ouer euery Church, the difference betweene their office and the office of the Apostles is gathered hence. For the Apostles had no certaine place of abode: but they went too and fro to founde newe Churches. But Pastours were set and appointed euerie man to his owne Church, and were as it were placed to watch ouer their Congregations.

Had ordained by Election. The Greeke worde *Cheirotonein* doth signifie to decree or ordaine a thing by lifting vp the hands, as they vse to doe in the assemblies of the people. Notwithstanding the Ecclesiasticall writers doe often vse the word *cheirotomia* in an other sense: to wit, for their solemne rite of ordaining, which is called in scripture, Laying on of hands. Furthermore by this manner of speech is verie excellently expressed the right way to ordaine Pastours. Paule and Barnabas are saide to choose Elders. Doe they this alone by their priuate office? may rather they suffer the matter to be decided, by the consent of them all: therefore in ordaining Pastours, the people had their free election. But least there should any tumult arise Paul and Barnabas sit as chiefe moderatours. Thus must the decree of the Councell of Loadicia be vnderstood, which forbiddeth that the people haue libertie graunted them to Elect.

They hauing prayed with fasting. They had a double end and reason of their praier: the first that, God would direct them with the spirit of wisdom and discretion, to choose the best and most meeete men. For they knewe that they were not furnished with so great wisdom, but they might bee deceiued: neither did they so much trust to their diligence, but that they knew that the principall point did consist in the blessing of god: as we see mens iudgements erre daily, where the heavenly government is not: and that all their labor is nothing worth, where the hande of God is not. These be the true signes and tokens of the godly, to call vpon the Spirit of God, that he may gouern their counsels. And if so be it this rule be to be obserued in all busineses: so often as the gouernment of the Church is in hand, which dependeth wholly vpon his will and pleasure, we must beware that we attempt nothing vnlesse we haue him for our guide and gouernour. And the second end of their prayer was, that God would furnish with necessary giftes those Pastours which were chosen. For it is a harder matter to fulfill such a function faithfullie as a man ought, than that mans strength is sufficient for it. Therefore they craue Gods help euen in this part also, hauing Paul and Barnabas for their authors. They fast likewise, that euen that may be a helpe to stir vp the feruentnes of their praiers. For we know how great our coldnes is otherwise. Not because it is alwaies necessaric that we should pray fasting, seeing that god doth inuite euē those who are ful to giue thanks: but

but when we are vrged by any necessitie to pray more seruenly than we vse commonly to doe, this is a verie profitable prouokement. And now we haue already declared what a weightie matter the choosing of Pastours is, wherein the soundnesse of the Church is handled. Wherefore no maruell, if Luke write that they vsed extraordinary prayers. And it is profitable for vs to marke this vse and other offasting, least we imagine with the Papiists that it is a meritorious worke: or least wee place the worship of God in it, seeing it is of it selfe nothing, neither is it of any importance with God, saue onely in as much as it is referred vnto another end.

They committed themselves to the Lord. We gather hereby first, what great care Paul and Barnabas had for the saluation of those, who by their industry were turned vnto the Lord. For they testifie that in this infirmity of the flesh men be subiect to more dangers, then that their faith can continue stedfast through his owne strength. Therefore this is the only refuge and aid, if the Lord keepe them continually whom he hath once receiued. And when Luke saith that they were commended to God in whom they beleueed, there commeth no small confidence hence vnto vs: because he assigneth this office to God as proper to him, to saue and defend all those who by true faith haue embraced his word.

24 *Passing through Pisidia.* We haue already said that Paul and Barnabas came to Antioch of Pisidia: being now about to returne to Antioch of Syria, whence they were sent away: they go through Pamphilia, which is the middle region toward the mount Taurus. And Perga, & Attalia are Cities lying neere together. And whereas Luke saith that they preach the word in the one only, wee may thereby guesse that they had not opportunitie offered them euery where to teach, which they were wont to neglect or let passe no where.

26 *When they had bin commended.* Luke might haue said that they were ordained there to bee the Apostles of the Gentiles, but by a circuit of words he doth more plainly expresse, that they were neither sent away of men, neither did they attempt any thing trusting to their owne strength, but that their whol iorney together with the successe was committed to God the authour thereof. Therefore their preaching was no mans worke, but a worke of the grace of God. And the word Grace is referred as well vnto the power and efficacie of the Spirit, as also vnto all the rest of the signes of fauour: because all those giftes bee free which God bestoweth vpon his seruants. And the sentence may be thus resolved, that they praised God that he would shew forth his grace, to further the labours of his seruants.

27 *After they had called the Church together.* As those who returne from an embassage vse to giue an account of their Actes: so Paule and Barnabas declare to the Church al the sum of their voyage: that it may thereby appeare what good successe they had & how faithfully they behaued themselves in their office: and also that they may exhort the faithful to giue thanks to god, as the thing it self gaue the large matter: therefore Luke saith not that they did extol the things which they themselves had done,

but

but whatsoeuer things the Lord had done by them. It is word for word, With them: but according to the phrase of the Hebrew tongue it is all one, as if it had beene saide, In them, or By them, or Toward them, or simply To them, in the Dative case. Therefore Luke doeth not say *sin autois*, but *meta autoon*: which I say for this cause, least any vnskilfull man ascribe some part of the praise to Paul and Barnabas, as if they had bin partners with God in the worke: whereas he doth rather make him the onely author of all those famous factes which they had done. Luke addeth immediatly after, that the Lord had opened the doore of faith to the Gentiles. For though they were sent vnto the Gentiles, yet the strangeness of the matter causeth them to woonder not a little: & not only the sodaine change did make the Iews astonied: but also because it was to them as it were a monster, that vncléan mé & such as were strangers from the kingdome of God, should be mixed with the holy seede of Abraham, that they might both together make one & the same Church, of God: they are now taught by the euent it selfe, that it was not for nothing that there were Apostles sent to them. Moreouer it is saide that the doore of faith was set open to the Gentiles, not onely because the Gospel was preached to them with the externall voice: but because being illuminate by the Spirit of God, they were called effectuellie vnto the faith. The kingdome of heauen is in deed set open to vs by the externall preaching of the Gospel: but no man entreth in saue he to whom God reacheth out his hand: no man draweth neere vnlesse he be drawn inwardly by the Spirit. Therefore Paul and Barnabas shewe and proue by the effect, that their calling was approued and ratified by God: because the faith of the Gentiles was as it were a seale ingrauen by the hand of God, to establish the same, as Paul saith.

Rom. 16. 15.
2. Cor. 3. 7.

CHAP. XV.

- 1 **A**ND certaine which came down from Iudea, did teach the brethren, that vnlesse they should be circumcised according to the manner of Moses, they could not be saued.
- 2 And when there arose sedition, and disputing not a little to Paul and Barnabas against them, they appointed that Paul and Barnabas and certaine other of them shoulde goe vp to the Apostles and Elders to Ierusalem, about this question.
- 3 And when they were sent by the Church they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conuersion of the Gentiles, and they brought great ioy to all the brethren.
- 4 And when they were come to Ierusalem, they were receiued of the Church, and of the Apostles and Elders, and they shewed what things so euer God had done with them.
- 5 And there arose certaine of the sect of the Pharisees which belcened, saying that it was needfull that they should bee circumcised, and to declare that the Law of Moses must be kept.

1 When

1 When Paul and Barnabas had endured many cumbates against the professed enemies of the Gospel: Luke doth now begin to declare that they were tried by domesticall warre. So that it was meete that their doctrine and ministerie should be proued by all meanes, to the end it might the better appeare that they were furnished by God and armed against all the assaults of the worlde and Satan. For that was no small confirmation for their doctrine, in that being shaken and battered with so manie ingines, it stood neuerthelesse, neither could the course thereof be broken off by so many hinderances. Therefore to this end doeth Paul boast that he suffered fights without and terrors within. This historie is most worthie the noting For though we do all naturallie abhor the crosse and all manner persecution, yet ciuill & domestical discord is more daungerous, least happily they discourage vs. When tyrants bend their force and run violently vpon men, flesh in deed is afraid, & al those who are not indued with the spirite of fortitude, doe tremble with all their heart: but then their consciences are not properly touched with any tempration. For this is knowne to be as it were the fatall estate of the Church. But when it falleth out so that the brethren go together by the eares, and that the Church is on an vprore within it selfe, it cannot be but that weake minds shalbe troubled and also faint: and especially when the controuersie is about doctrine, which alone is the holy bond of brotherly vnitie: finallie there is nothing which doth more indamage the Gospel, then ciuill discord: because it doeth not onely pearce and wound weake consciences, but also minister occasion to the wicked to backbite. Wherefore we must diligently note this historie, that we may know that it is no new example, if among those who professe the same Gospel there arise some wranglings & strife about doctrine, when proud men can get them a name (wherof they are so furiously desirous) by no other meanes, but by bringing in their owne inuentions. It is certaine, that as there is but one god, so there is but one truth of this God. Therefore when Paul goeth about to exhort the faithfull vnto mutual consent, hee vseth this argument, One God, one faith, one Baptisme &c. But when we see wicked men arise, who go about both to deuide the Church by their factions, and also either to corrupt the Gospel with their false and filthie inuentions, or else to bring the same in suspition: wee ought to know the subtiltie of Satan. Therefore Paul saith elsewhere that heresies come abroad, that those who are tried, may bee made manifest. And assuredly the Lord doth wonderfully make void the subtiltie of Satan, in that he trieth the faith of his by such trials, and doeth beautifie his word with worthy and excellent victorie: and causeth the trueth to shine more clearely, which the wicked went about to darken. But it is very conuenient to weigh all the circumstances of the historie which Luke noteth.

2. Cor. 7. 5.

Ephes. 4. 6.

1. Cor. 11.
19.

Which came downe from Iudea. This cloake and colour was very forceable to deceiue euen good men then. Ierusalem was honored not without cause among all Churches: because they reuerenced it euen as their mother. For the Gospel was deducted as it were by pypes and conduits from

from that fountaine. These seducers come thence: they pretend the Apostles: they boast that they bring nothing but that which they learned of them. They blind & blear the eyes of the vnskillfull with this smoke: & those who are light and wicked do greedily snatch at the color which is offered thē. The perturbation of the church, doth like a tempest shake those who were otherwise good & moderate, so that they are enforced to stumble. Therefore we must note this subtilty of satan, that he abuseth the names of holy men, that he may deceiue the simple, who being won with the reuerence of the men, dare not inquire after the thing it selfe. Luke doth not expresse in deed with what affection these knaues were moued: yet it is likely that peruerse zeale was the cause which moued thē to set thēselues against Paul & Barnabas. For ther be certain churlish natures which nothing can please but that which is their owne. They had seene that circumcision and other rites of the law were obserued at Ierusalem: wherſoeuer they become, they can abide nothing which is not agreeable thereto: as if the example of one church did bind al the rest of the churches with a certain Law. And though such be caried with a preposterous zeale to procure tumults: yet are they pricked inwardly with their ambition, & with a certain kind of stubbernes. Neuertheles satan hath that he would: for the minds of the godly haue such a mist cast before them, that they can scarce know black from white. Therefore we must beware first of this plague that some prescribe not a law to otherſome after their manner: that the example of one church be not a prejudice of a cōmon rule. Also we must vse another caution, that the persons of men do not hinder or darken the examination of the matter or cause. For if Satan transfigure himself into an Angel of light, & if by sacrilegious boldnes he vsurp the holy name of God: what maruell is it, if he doe like wickedly deceiue men vnder the names of holy men? The end shall at length declare that the Apostles meant nothing lesse, than to lay the yoke of the Law vpon the necke of the Gentiles: and yet Satan meant vnder this shift to get in. So it falleth out oftentimes that those who contrary the doctrine of Christ, creepe in vnder the title of his seruants. Therefore there is one only remedie, to come to search out the matter with sound iudgements: also it behoueth vs to preuent an offence least we think that the faithful seruants of God doe therefore strue among themſelues: because Satan doth falsely abuse their names, that he may set certaine shadowes by the cares together to terrifie the simple.

2 *When there was sedition arisen.* This was no small triall in that Paul and Barnabas are hailed into a troublesome tumult. There was mischief enough already in the matter it selfe: but it is a more cruell mischief, when the contention waxeth so hote, that they are enforced to fight with their brethren as with enimies. Adde moreouer the infamie, wherewith they saw themſelues burdened among the simple and vnskillfull, as if they would trouble the peace of the Church with their stubbernes. For it falleth out oftentimes so, that the faithful seruants of Christ are enuied alone, and beare al the blame, after that they haue bin vniustly troubled, & haue faithfully employed themſelues in defense of a good

good cause. Therefore they must be endewed with inuincible courage to despise al false reports which are caied about concerning them. Therefore Paul boasteth in an other place that he went through the midst of seditions. But the seruants of God must obserue such moderation, that they abhor so much as they can all discord: if at any time Satan raise tumults and contentions, let them indeuout to appease them: and finallie let them do all that they can to foster and cherish vnitie. But againe on the other side when the truth of god is assailed, let them refuse no cum-bate for defense therof: ne let them feare to oppose themselues valiantly though heauen and earth goe together. And let vs being admonished by this example, learn, so ofte as there ariseth any tumult in the church, wisely to weigh through whose fault it came, least we rashly condene the ministers of Christ: whose grauitie is rather to be praised, because they can abide so valiantly such violent assaults of Satan. Secondly let vs call to minde that Satan was bridled by the wonderfull prouidence of God, that he might not put the doctrine of Paul to the foyle. For if he had bin suffered to do hurt at his pleasure so soone as the faith of the Gentiles had bin pulied downe and ouerthrowne, the Gospell preached by Paul should haue fallen to the ground, and the gate should haue shut against the calling of the Gētiles. Thirdly let vs learne that we must in time preuent dissention of what sort so euer it be, least it break out into the flame of conteation: because satan seeketh nothing else by the fans of dissention, but to kindle so many fires. But againe seeing we see the primitiue Church on an vprere, and the best seruantes of Christ exercised with sedition, if the same thing befall vs nowe, let vs not feare as in some newe and vnwonted matter: but crauing at the Lords handes such an end as he now made, let vs passe through tumults with the same renour of faith.

Vnlesse yee be Circumcised. Luke setteth downe briefly in these words the state of the question: to wit, that these seducers went about to bind mens consciences with necessitie of keeping the Law. Circumcision is in deed mentioned alone in this place: but it appeareth by the text that they moued the question about the keeping of the whole lawe. And because Circumcision was as it were a solemne entrance and admission into other rites of the lawe, therefore by Synecdoche the whole lawe is comprehended vnder one part. These enimies of Paul did not denie that Christ was the Messias: but though they gaue him their names, they retained therewithall the old ceremonies of the Lawe. The Error might haue seemed tollerable at the first glimse. Why doeth not Paule then dissemble, at least for some short time, least hee shake the Church with conflict? For the disputation was concerning externall matters, concerning which Paule himselve forbiddeth elsewhere to stande and strīue too much. But there were three weightie causes which enforced him to gainestande. For if the keeping of the lawe bee necessarie, mans saluation is tyed to workes, which must be grounded in the grace of Christ alone, that the faith may bee settled and quiet. Therefore when Paule sawe the worshippe of the lawe set against the

Gal. 4. 13.

2. Tim. 2.

24.

the free righteousness of faith, it was unlawful for him to hold his peace, vnlesse he would betray Christ. For seeing the aduersaries did denie that any should be saued, saue he which did obserue the Law of Moses, by this meanes they did translate vnto workes the glorie of saluation, which they tooke from Christ, & hauing shaken assurance they did vex miserable soules with vnquietnesse: againe it was no small thing neither of any smal importance to spoile & rob faithful soules of the liberty gotten by Christs blood. Though the inward libertie of the Spirit were common to the fathers as well as to vs, yet we know what Paul saith, that they were shut vp vnder the childish ward & custodie of the Law, so that they did not much differ from seruants: but we are loose from the schoolemaster ship of the law after that Christ was reuealed, & we haue more liberty, the time of our nonage being as it were ended. The third vice of this doctrine was, because it darkened the light of the Church, or at least did put in as it were certaine clouds, that Christ the sonne of righteousness might not giue perfect light. In summe, Christianitie should shortly haue come to nothing, if Paul should haue yeelded to such beginnings. Therefore he entreth the cumbate not for the external vncircumcision of the flesh, but for the free saluation of men. Secondly that he may acquit and set free godly consciences from the curse of the Lawe, and the gilt of eternall death. Last of all that after all hinderances are driuen away, the brightnes of the grace of Christ may shine as in a pleasant and cleare heauen. Moreouer these knaues did great iniurie to the Law when they did wickedly corrupt the right vse thereof. This was the naturall and right office of the Law, to lead men by the hand like a scholemaster vnto Christ: therefore it could not be worse corrupt, then when vnder colour of it, the power and grace of Christ were diminished. After this sort must we looke into the fountaines of all questions, least by our silence we betray the truth of God, so often as we see satan by his subtiltie aime right at it: neither let our mindes be changed and wax faint through any perils, or reproches and slanders: because we must constantly defend pure religion though heauen and earth must goe together. The seruants of Christ must be no fighters: therefore if there bee any contention risen, they must rather studie to appease and pacifie the same by their moderation, than by and by to blow to the assault. Secondly they must take good heed of superfluous and vaine conflicts: neither shall they handle controuersies of any smal weight: but when they see Satan wax so proud, that religion cannot any longer continue safe and sound vnlesse he bee preuented, they must needs take a good hart to them, and rise to resist: neither let them feare to enter euen most hatefull cumbates. The name of peace is in deed plausible and sweete: but cursed is that peace which is purchased with so great losse, that we suffer the doctrine of Christ to perish, by which alone wee growe together into godly and holy vnitie. The Papists cause vs at this day to be sore hated, as if we had beene the causers of deadly tumults, wherewith the world is shaken, but wee can well defend our selues, because the blasphemies which we indeuoured to reprove, were more cruell, than that it was lawfull for vs to holde our peace.

peace. Therefore we are not to be blamed, because we haue taken vp-
on vs to enter cumbates in defence of that cause, for which we were to
fight euen with the verie Angels. Let them crie till their throates bee
fore, Paul his example is sufficient for vs, that we must not bee either
cold or slacke in defending the doctrine of godlines, when the ministers
of satan seeke to ouerthrow it with might and maine. For their brain-
sick distemperature ought not to passe the constancie of the seruants of god.
When Paul did zealously set himself against the false Apostles, sedition
began at length by reason of the conflict: and yet the Spirit of God doth
not therefore reprove him, but doth rather with due praises commend
that fortitude which he had giuen that holy man.

They determined &c. The Spirit of God put them in minde of this re-
medie to appease the tumult, which might otherwise haue gone farther
with doing much hurt. Whereby we be also taught, that we must alwaies
seeke such meanes as be fit for ending discorde: because God doeth so
highly commende peace, let the faithfull shewe that they doe what
they can to nourish the peace of the Church. The trueth must alwayes
be first in order with them, in defense whereof they must be afraid of no
tumults. Yet they must so temper their heat, that they refuse no meanes
of godly agreement: yea let them of their owne accord inuent what
wayes so euer they can, and let them be wittie in seeking the out. Ther-
fore we must obserue this meane: least being carried away through im-
moderate vehemencie of zeale, we be carried beyond the iust boundes.
For we must bee couragious in defense of true doctrine, not stubberne,
nor rash. Therefore let vs learne to ioyne together these two vertues
which the Spirit of God commendeth in Paul. When he is drawne into
the field by the wicked, he is not afraid boldly to offer himself: but when
he doth meekely admit the remedie which was offered, hee declareth
plainly what small desire he had to fight. For otherwise hee might haue
boasted that he did not passe for the Apostles, & so haue stood stoutly in
that: but the desire of peace did not suffer him to refuse their iudgment.
Moreouer ignorant and weak men should haue conceiued a sinister opi-
nion, if they should haue seene two men only seperated from al the ser-
uants of Christ. And godly teachers must in no case neglect this way to
cherish faith, that they may shew that they agree with the church. Paul
in deed did not depend vpon the becke of the Apostles, that he woulde
change his opinion, if he should haue found them contrary to him, who
would not haue giuen place euen to the very Angels, as hee boasteth in
first Chapt. to the Galathians. But least the wicked should slanderously
report that he was a man that stood too much in his owne conceit and
which was too proud, & which did please himself with an vnseemly con-
tempt of all men: he offered to giue an account of his doctrine, as it be-
came him, & as it was profitable for the Church. Secondly he presented
himself before the Apostles with sure hope of victorie, because he knew
full well what would be their iudgement: seing they were guided by the
same Spirit wherewith he was gouerned. Notwithstanding it may be de-
manded for what purpose the men of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas

Gal. 1. 2.

vnto the rest of the Apostles. For if they did so greatly reuerence them, that they stood in doubt, vntil they had giuen iudgement on this side or that, their faith was hitherto vaine and altogether none. But the answer is easie: Seing they knew that all the Apostles were sent by Christ alone with the same commandements, and that they had the same Spirite giuen them, they were fully perswaded of the end & successe, and vndoubtedly this counsel proceeded from honest & stout men, who were not ignorant that the knaues did falsely pretend the names of Iames & Peter. Wherefore they sought nothing else but that the Apostles might further a good matter with their consent. To the same end were all holy Synods assembled since the beginning, that graue men and such as were well exercised in the worde of God might decide controuersies, not after their owne pleasure, but according to the authority of God. This is worth noting, least the papists pearce any man with their loud outcries, who to the end they may ouerthrow Christ, and his Gospel, and put out all the light of godlines: thrust vpon vs Councils; as if euery definition & determination of men wer to be counted an heauenly oracle. But if the holy fathers had their sitting at this day, they would cry with one mouth, that there was nothing more vnlawful for them, neither did they meane any thing lesse, than to set downe or deliuer any thing, without hauing the word of Christ for their guid, who was their onely teacher euen as he is ours. I omit this that the Papists leane onely vnto vntimely Councils, which breath out nothing but grosse ignorance and Barbarisme. But euen the best & most choise must be reckened in that number, that they may be subiect to the worde of God. There is a greuous complaint of Gregorie Nazianzene extant, that there was neuer any Council which had a good ende. What excellencie so euer did flourish and was in force in the Church, it cannot bee denied but that it began to decay an hundred yeeres after. Therefore if that holy man were now liuing how stoutlie woulde hee reiect the toys of the Papistes? who without all shame most impudently bring in the iuglings of visures in steede of lawfull Councels, and that to that ende, that the worde of God may packe, so soone as a few bald and foolish men haue set downe whatsoeuer pleased them.

3 *Being brought on the way by the Church.* Where as by the common consent of the Church there were ioined to Paul and Barnabas companions, who might for dueties sake conduct them, we may therby gather, that all the godly were on their side: & that they did neuer otherwise thinke but that the cause was theirs as well as the Apostles. Wherefore they determined the journey of Paul and Barnabas with like minds as they tooke it in hande: to wit, that they might tame and put to silence those troublesome spirites, who did falsely make boast of the Apostles. Whereas he saith shortly after that they certified the brethren in their voyage of the wonderful conuersion of the Gentiles, it is a testimony & token that they came not to Ierusalem fraught with feare: but that they did euen without feare stoutly professe that which they had taught before. Therefore they come not to plead their cause before their iudges:

but

but that they may with common consent and iudgement, on both sides approue that which was commanded by God touching the abolishing of ceremonies. For though they did not despise the iudgement of the Apostles, yet because they knew that it was not lawfull for them, neither for the Apostles to decree otherwise concerning the cause, it did not become them to stand as men whose matter is handled at the bar: thence commeth the boldnes of reioicing. To this end tendeth the ioy of the godly wherby they subscribe both to the doctrine of Paul, & also the calling of the Gentiles.

4 *They were receiued of the Church.* By this word Church he meaneth the multitude it selfe and the whole bodie: that done he assigneth a peculiar place to the Apostles and Elders, by whom Paul and Barnabas were specially receiued. Furthermore because the Apostles had no certaine place of abode at Ierusalem: but went euer now and then sometimes to one place and sometimes to another, whither soeuer occasion did call them, that Church had Elders to whom the ordinarie gouernement of the Church was committed: and what the one function differeth from the other we haue before declared. And hereby it appeareth what brotherly curtesie there was in the Apostles and Elders, because they doe not onely courteously receiue Paul and Barnabas: but so soone as they heare what successe they had with their paines they tooke, they magnifie the grace of God. Luke repeateth againe that forme of speech which we had before in the chapter next going before, when he saith that they declared whatsoeuer things God had done with them. Wherin we must remember that which I said before, that God is not made a fellow labourer, but all the whole praise of the worke is ascribed to him. Therefore it is saide that hee did that with Paul and Barnabas, which hee did by them: as he is said to deale mercifully with vs, when he helpeth our miseries.

Chr. 14. 23.

5 *Certaine of the sect of the Pharisees.* It is not without cause that Luke expresseth what kinde of men they were, which went about to trouble or hinder Paul euen at Ierusalem also. And it is to bee thought that the euill flowed from that fountaine: and that Luke doeth nowe more plainly expresse, that there brake out nowe also fannes, out of that verie same sect, from whence the authours of that wicked dissention came. For though they had giuen Christ their names, yet there remained reliques of their former nature. We knowe howe proude the Pharisees were, howe hautie, howe lostie their looks were: all which they woulde haue forgotten, if they had truly put on Christ. like as there remained no phariseisme in Paul, but a great part had gotten the habite of stubbernnesse by long custome which they could not shake off so easily by and by. Forasmuch as there reigned most of all among them hypocrisie: they were too much addicted to external rites, which are couerings for vices. They were likewise puffed vp with pride, so that they did tyrannously couet to make all other men subiect to their decrees. It is wel knowne how sore sicke the monks are of both diseases. Wherby it commeth to passe that nothing is more cruel than they

to oppresse the Church, nothing is more wicked or froward then they to despise the word of god. Moreouer we see many of them which came out of those denes which haue cast from them their cowle, and yet can they neuer forget those conditions which they learned there.

- 6 And the Apostles and Elders came together, that they might looke to this busines.
- 7 And after there had beene great disputing, Peter arose and saide to them, Men and brethren, yee know how that of old time God did choose in vs, that by my mouth the Gentiles should heare the word of the Gospel, and beleene.
- 8 And God who is knower of the hearts, bare witness to them giuing them his holy Spirit, as to vs.
- 9 And he put no difference betweene them and vs, after that by faith he had purified their hearts.
- 10 Therefore why do ye now tempt God, to lay a yoke vpon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to beare?
- 11 But we beleeue that we haue saluation through the grace of our Lorde Iesus Christ, euen as they.

6 The Apostles and Elders met together. Luke saith not that al the whole Church was gathered together, but those who did excell in doctrine and iudgement, and those who according to their office were competent iudges in this matter. It may bee in deede that the disputation was had in presense of the people. But least any man should thinke that the common people were suffered haue ouer heade to handle the matter, Luke doth plainly make mention of the Apostles and Elders: as it was more meete that they should heare the matter and to decide it. But let vs know that here is prescribed by God a forme and an order in assembling synods, when there ariseth any controuersie, which cannot otherwise be decided. For seeing that many did daily gainstand Paul, this disputation alone, by reason whereof there was great ruine like to ensue, and which was already come to hot combates, did enforce him to go to Ierusalem.

7 And when there had bin great disputation. Though there were choise made of graue men & such as were publike teachers of the Church, yet could not they agree by and by. Whereby appeareth howe the Lord did exercise his Church euen then by the infirmitie of men, that it might learne to bee wise with humilitie. Moreouer he suffered (euen in that companie and assemblie, wherein hee was chiefe) the principall point of Christian doctrine to bee diuersly tossed and handled: least wee should wonder, if at any time it so fall out, that men who are otherwise learned and godly, doe through vnskillfulness fall into an error. For some were not so quicke witted, that they could thoroughly see into the greatnes of the matter. So that when they iudge that the law ought to bee kept, being vnaduisedly carried away with the zeale of the law, they see not into how deepe a laberinth they throw the consciences

of other men and their owne also. They thought that Circumcision was an eternal & vniolable token of Gods couenant: the same opinion had they of all the whole Lawe. Wherefore Peter standeth chiefly vpon this, to shewe the state of the question, which the most of them knewe not. And his oration hath two members. For first he proueth by the authority of god, that the gentiles must not be enforced to keep the law: secondly he teacheth that all mans saluation is ouerthrowne, if the conscience be once caught in this snare. Therefore the former part (wherein he declareth that he was sent of God to teach the Gentiles, and that the holy Spirit came downe vpon them) tendeth to this end, that men did not vnaduisedly disannull the ceremonies of the Law, but that God is the author of that disannulling. And so soone as the authoritie of God is brought forth, all doubting is taken away because this is all our wisdom, to stay our selues vpon the authority, government and commandement of God, and to make more account of his becke and pleasure, then of all reasons. Now it is meete that we ponder the words of Peter, whereby he proueth that this was granted to the gentiles by God, to be free from the yoke of the Law.

You know. He calleth them to beare witnesse, and vnto them hee appealeth, least any man should thinke that he is about to speake of some darke and doubtfull thing. The historie was well knowne to them all. That which remained, he sheweth that they were blind euen in most cleare light, because they do not rightly consider & marke the worke of God, yea because they had not long agoe learned that which was openly shewed. He calleth the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel Old dayes, or the old time: as if he should say, Long agoe: as it were since the first beginning of the Church, after that Christ began to gather to himselfe any people.

God did choise in vs. The word Chooseth doth signifie to apoint or decree. Though Peter doth comprehend as wel the free Election of God, as the choise, whereby God did adopt the Gentiles to be his people. Therefore he chose, that is as it were making choise, that he might shew a token of his free election in the gentiles, he would that by my mouth they should heare the doctrine of the gospel. These words, *In vs*, do import as much, as in our sight, or we being witnesses, or, among vs. For his meaning is that he declareth nothing, but that which they knew full well, to wit, which was done before their eies. The phrase is common ynough both among the Grecians, & also among the Hebritians: vnlesse we had lesse resolute as some other do, He hath chosen me out of this company.

And beleue. This was a seale to confirme the calling of the Gentiles. The office of teaching was inioyned Peter by an oracle: but the fruite which came of his doctrine, doth make his ministry noble, & authenticall, as they call it. Forseeing that the elect are illuminate into the faith by a peculiar grace of the Spirit, doctrine shal bring forth no fruit, vnlesse the Lord shew forth his power in his ministers: in teaching the mindes of those inwardly which heare, and in drawing their hearts inwardly. Therefore seeing the Lord commanded that the doctrine of the Gospel

should be brought vnto the Gentiles, he did sanctifie them to himselfe, that they might be no longer prophane. But the solemne consecration was then perfect in al points, when he imprinted in their hearts by faith, the marke of their adoption. The sentence which followeth immediatlie is to be vnderstood as set down by way of expositiō. For Peter annexeth the visibie graces of the Spirit vnto faith: as assuredlie they were nothing else but an addition thereof. Therefore seeing that the Gentiles are ingrafted into the people of God without Circumcision and Ceremonies, Peter gathereth that it was not well done to lay vpon them any necessitie to keepe the Law. Yet it seemeth to be but a weake argument to proue their Election withal, because the holy ghost came down vpon them. For they were such giftes that they could not reason from the same, that they were reckoned in the number of the godly. But it is the Spirit of regeneration alone, which distinguisheth the children of God from strangers. I answer, Though men who were otherwise vaine, were indued with the gift of tongues and such like: yet doth Peter take for a thing which all men grant, that which was knowne, that God had sealed in Cornelius and his cosins, his free adoption by the visibie grace of the Spirit, as if hee should point out his children with his finger.

The knower of the hearts. He applieth this adiunct to God according to the circumstance of the present matter: and it hath vnder it a secret contrarietie, That men are more addicted to externall puritie, because they iudge according to their grosse & earthly sense and vnderstanding: but God doth looke into the heart. Therefore Peter teacheth that they iudge preposterously in this matter according to mans vnderstanding, seing that the inward purenes of the hart alone is here to be esteemed, which we know not. And by this meanes doeth he bridle our rashnesse, least taking to our selues more than we ought, we murmur against the iudgement of God. As if he should say: If thou see no reason of that testimony which God gaue them, thinke with thy selfe what great difference there is betweene him & thee. For thou art holden with external pompe according to thy grosse nature, which must be abandoned, when we come to the throne of God, where the hearts of men are knowne spirituallie. But in the meane season we must note a generall doctrine, that the eyes of God doe not looke vpon the vaine pompe of men, but vpon the integritie of mens harts, as it is written Ier. 5. Whereas the old interpreter & Erasmus translate it, that God knoweth the hearts, it doth not sufficiently expresse that which Luke saith in greek: for when he calleth God *Cardiagnosten*, he setteth him against men, who iudge rather for the most part by the vtwarde appearance: and therefore they may be called *profopognostai* or knowers of the face, if they be compared with God.

9 And he put no difference. There was in deede some difference, because the Gentiles who were vncircumcised were sodainely admitted vnto the couenant of eternall life: where as the Iewes were prepared by circumcision vnto faith. But Peters meaning is, that they were both chosen together by God vnto the hope of the same inheritance, and that

that they were extolled into the like degree of honour, that they might be the children of God & members of Christ, and finally the holy seede of Abraham, a priestly and princely generation. Whereupon it followeth that they cannot without sacrilege be counted vncleane, sithence God hath chosen them to bee a peculiar people, and hath consecrated them to be holy vessels of his temple. For the wall of seperation being pulled downe whereby the Gentiles and Iewes were diuided among themselves, hee hath ioyned the Gentiles to the Iewes, that they might growe together into one bodie: and that I may so saie, hee hath mixed circumcision and vncircumcision together, that as well those of the householde as straungers may bee one in Christ, and may make one Church: and that there may not be any longer either Iew or Grecian.

Ephc. 2.14

Seeing that by faith he had purified. This member is answerable to that former adiunct which he applied to god: as if he shuld say, that god who knoweth the hearts, did inwardly purge the Gentiles, when he vouchsafed to make them partakers of his adoption, that they might be indued with spirituall cleannes. But he addeth farther that this puritie did consist in faith. Therefore he teacheth first that the Gentiles haue true holines without ceremonies, which may suffice before Gods iudgmēt seat. Secondly he teacheth that this is attained vnto by faith, & from it doth it flow. In like sort Paul gathereth, that vncircumcision doth not hinder a man but that he may be counted holy and iust before god: because Circumcision did follow after righteousness in the person of Abraham, and by order of time it was latter. But here ariseth a question, whether that purity which the fathers had in times past were vnlike to that which God gaue now to the Gentiles. For it seemeth that Peter distinguisheth the gentiles from the Iewes by this mark, because being contēt with the cleanness of the heart alone, they need no helpe of the Law. I answer that the one of them differ from the other, not in substance, but in forme. For God had respect alwayes vnto the inward cleannes of the heart: and the ceremonies were giuen to the old people onely for this cause, that they might helpe their faith. So that cleannes as touching figures and exercises, was onely for a time, vntil the comming of Christ, which hath no place among vs at this day: like as there remaineth from the very beginning of the world vnto the ende, the same true worship of God, to wit, the spirituall worship: yet is there great difference in the visible forme. Nowe wee see that the fathers did not obtaine righteousness by Ceremonies, neither were they therefore pure before God: but by the cleanness of the heart. For the Ceremonies of themselves were of no importance to iustifie them: but they were onely helpes, which did accidentally (that I may so terme it) purge them: yet so that the fathers and we had the same truth. Now when Christ came, all that which was accidentall did vanish away: and therefore seeing the shadowes be driuen away, there remaineth the bare & plaine purenesse of the heart. Thus is that obiection easily answered which the Iewes thinke cannot possiblie bee answered, Circumcision is called

Rom. 4.11

Gen. 17.13

the eternall couenant, or of the world: therefore say they, it was not to be abolished. If any man shall say that this is not referred vnto the visible signe, but rather vnto the thing figured: it shall bee well answered, but there is another answer besides this. Seeing that the kingdome of Christ was a certaine renewing of the world, there shall no inconuenience follow, if he made an end of all the shadowes of the Lawe. For as much as the perpetuities of the Law is grounded in Christ. I come now vnto the second member, where Peter placeth the cleanness of the Gentiles in faith. Why doth not he say, In perfection of vertues, or holiness of life saue onely because men haue righteousness from another, and not from themselves? for if men by liuing well and iustly should purchase righteousness, or if they should be cleane before God by nature: this sentence of Peter should fall to ground. Therefore the Spirit doth in these words plainly pronounce, that all mankind is polluted and with filthines defiled: secondly that their blots can by no other meanes be wiped away, than by the grace of Christ. For seeing that faith is the remedie whereby the Lord doth freely helpe vs, it is set as wel against the common nature of all men, as against euery mans owne merites. When I say that al mankind is polluted, my meaning is, that we bring nothing from our mothers wombe but meere filthinesse, and that there is no righteousness in our nature, which can reconcile vs to God. Mans soul was in deed indewed with singular giftes at the first: but all parts thereof are so corrupt with sinne, that there remaineth in it no droppe of purenesse any longer, therefore we must seeke for cleanness without our selues. For if any man alledge that it may be recovered by merites of workes: there is nothing more absurd than to imagine that wicked and froward nature can deserue any thing. Therefore it resteth that men seeke elsewhere for that, which they shall neuer be able to finde within themselves. And surely it is the office of faith to translate that vnto vs which is proper to Christ, and to make it ours by free participation. So that there is a mutuall relation betweene faith and the grace of Christ. For faith doth not make vs cleane, as a vertue or qualitie powered into our soules: but because it receiueth that cleanness which is offered in Christ. Wee must also note the phrase, that God purified the hearts: whereby Luke doth both make God the authour of faith, and he teacheth also that cleannes is his benefit. To make short, hee signifieth vnto vs, that that is giuen to men by the grace of God, which they cannot giue to themselves. But forasmuch as we said that faith taketh that of Christ which it transpoureth into vs: we must now see how the grace of Christ doth make vs cleane, that we may please god. And there is a double maner of purging, because Christ doth offer & present vs cleane and iust in the sight of his father, by putting away our sinnes daily, which he hath once purged by his blood: secondly because by mortifying the lusts of the flesh by his spirit, he reformeth vs vnto holiness of life. I do willingly comprehend both kinds of purging vnder these words: because Luke doth not touch one kind of purging only, but he teacheth that the whole perfection thereof consisteth without the ceremonies of the Law.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye. This is the other part of the sermon, wherein Peter sheweth how deadly that doctrine is, which Paul his enemies sought to bring in: to wit, which might drowne godly soules in despaire. He inferreth and gathereth out of the former member, that God is tempted, if the Gentiles be enforced to keepe the law of necessitie: he riseth higher and pearceth euē vnto the very fountaine. For he reasoneth hither to, that the Gentiles should haue iniurie done them; if there be more required at their hands, then God will, and seing that he made them equall with the holy people, & did vouchsafe them the honour of adoption, it was an vnmeet and inconuenient matter that they shoulde be reiected, and so his liberalitie should be restrained. For he saith last of all that this faith is sufficient for them, though they want ceremonies. And now he taketh an higher principle, that those who tie mens saluation to the workes of the law, leaue the no good hope: but rather throw the whole worlde headlong into horrible destruction, if it can obtaine saluation by no other meanes but by keeping the lawe, with what arguments he proueth this we shal see in their place. As touching the words, seeing the scripture saith, that God is tempted diuers wayes, Peter his meaning is in this place, that God is prouoked as it were offset purpose, when there is an heauier burthen laid vpon men, then they be able to beare: and that his power is brought within boundes when that yoke is bound which he doth loose, which is nothing els, but by struing against nature to match our selues with Giants, as they say.

That the yoke should be laid vpon their neckes. The meaning of the words is plaine, that God is tempted when there is laid vpon mens consciences, a forer burden, then they are able to beare, and by this meanes the saluation of mens soules is sore shaken. Seeing that they must needs by this meanes be drowned in despaire, which cannot be without their destruction. But that iniurie which is done to god is no whit more tollerable, when as he is robbed of his right, that hee may not haue libertie to deliuer vs. But we may easily gather out of the thing it selfe, that he doth not speake of the ceremonies only. The seruitude of the old training vnder the law was hard and laborious: but yet it were too absurde to call it a yoke that cannot be borne: and we know that not only holy men, but also euē most hypocrites did wel & exactly accomplishe the outwarde obseruation of the rites.

Moreouer, it were not any hard matter to satisfie the morall law, if it were content with corporal obedience only, and did not require spiritual righteousness. For it is graunted to many to bridle their handes and feete: but to moderate all the affections so, that there may reigne perfect abstinence and puritie as well in the soule as in the bodie, this is too hard a matter. Therefore those be too foolish who restrain vnto ceremonies Peters woordes, whereby the weaknesse of men to perfourme the righteousness of the heart is expressed: which doeth not onely farre passe their strength, but is altogether contrary to nature. These men were I warraunt you deceiued by one reason, because the question was moued concerning ceremonies only: but they do remember that Peter did

did more attentiuely and more wisely consider as became him, what a labyrinth this error (to look to, but light) did bring with it. The false Apostles did auouch that no man could attaine vnto saluation vnlesse he did keepe the ceremonies. If mans saluation be tyed to workes, it shall be no longer grounded in the grace of Christ, and so by this meanes free reconciliatio shal fall flat to the ground. Now seeing that mans strength is vnable to keepe the law, all men are subiect to the curse, which the Lorde there denounceth against the trangressours, and so by this means all men shall come in daunger of despayre, seeing that they see themselves gilty of eternal death by the law. Peraduenture the false apostles vnderstood these things craftily. But Peter pearceth the very fountain, that he may bring to light the deadly poyson of that doctrine: and thus must we do, so often as Satan doth craftily thrust in wicked errors. At this day we seem to some to be too contentious, when as we do so stoutly stand in this, that men must not pray for the dead. For it is both a most auncient custome, neither is it a thing to looke to, very dangerous, though men powre out superfluous prayers: yet it is a plausible opinion, because it carrieth some colour of humane godlines.

Furthermore vnskillfull men iudge thus, because they seeke not out the headspring. For if we graunt that men may pray for the dead, wee must also admit this, that they are nowe punished by the iudgement of God, because they made not satisfaction in this life for their sinnes. And so by this means the force of Christes satisfaction is translated vnto the workes of men: secondly the rule of praying aright is ouerthrowen, if me may pray at all aduenture without the word of God, this is also a greater absurditie, than that we ought lightly to passe ouer it. In sum, we can neuer giue true iudgement of any question, vnlesse hauing throughlye ript vp the fountain of that doctrine which is called in question, we deduct all consequents, which it bringeth with it. Therefore it is no maruell if Peter to the end he may pull the false apostles out by the eares, as it were out of their lurking dennes, doe generally dispute touching the whol law: because he doth nothing els but open the matter it self, where of the simple were ignorant: that they may all see what a deadly doctrine it is, which doth both extinguish the grace of Christ, and drown soules in the horrible dungeon of despaire.

Neither we nor our fathers. Peter doth not only dispute what men haue done in deed, but what they were able to do, neither doth he speake only of the common raffe raffe, but of the holy fathers. Seeing that hee denyeth that they were able to beare the yoke of the lawe: it is manifest that the law cannot possibly be kept. I know that Ierome his saying is so generally receiued, that it is as it were an vndoubted and most certaine *maxime*, If any man say that it is a thing vnpossible to keepe the law, let him be accursed: but we must not hearken to any voice of man whiche is contrary to the iudgement of the Spirit of God. Wee heare what the Spirit pronounceth in this place by the mouth of Peter, not concerning the will and workes of men, but touching their habilitie and power. And hereunto agreeth Paule, affirming that it was an vnpossible thing that the

the lawe should giue vs life, forasmuch as it was weak through the flesh. In deed if any man were able to fulfill the law, he shoulde finde the life, which is there promised: but forasmuch as Paule denyeth that life can bee gotten by the lawe, it followeth that ther is farther & higher righteousness required there, then man is able to perforce. I confesse indeed that Ierome doth not wholly graunt to the strength of nature, power to fulfill the law, but partly also to the grace of God: as hee doth afterward expound himselfe, that a faithfull man holpen by the grace of the Spirit, may bee said to bee able to fulfill the law. But euen that mitigation is not true. For if we do weigh the strength of nature only, men shall not only be vnable to beare the yoke of the lawe: but they shall not be able to moue so much as a finger, to perforce the least iote of the law. And surely if that be true, that all the cogitations of mans mind are wicked from his childhood, that all the vnderstandings of flesh are enemies to god, that there is none which seeketh after God: and other such places which are common in the Scripture, tending to the same end: but especially which are cited by Paul in the third to the Romans: man his power and abilitie to fulfill the law shall not only be weake and lame, but altogether none, to begin. Therefore we must thus thinke, that euen the very faithfull after they being regenerate by the spirit of God, doe studie to attaine vnto the righteousness of the law, doe perforce notwithstanding but the halfe and far less then half, not the whole. For doubtlesse Peter speaketh not in this place of the Epicure or profane man: but of Abraham, of Moses, and of other holy fathers which wer the most perfect in the world, & yet he saith that these fainted vnder the burden of the law: because it did passe their strength. It is hatefully obiected, that the spirit of God is blasphemed, when as abilitie to fulfill the lawe is taken away from his grace and help, but we may readily answer: because the question is not what the grace of the spirit is able to doe: but what that measure of grace is able to do, which God doth diuide to euery one in this life. For we must alwayes consider what God doth promise to do, neither let vs vnadvisedly aske this question, whether that can be done which he himself doth testifie shall neuer be, and which he wil not haue done. He promisseth the grace & aid of the Spirit to the faithful, whereby they may be able to resist the lusts of the flesh, & to subdue them: yet shall they not quite abolish & driue them away. Hee promisseth them grace whereby they may walk in newnes of life: yet shall they not be able to run so swiftly as the law requireth. For he wil haue them kept vnder during their whole life, that they may flie to beg pardon, If it be vnlawfull to separate from the power of god his counsell & the order by him set down, it is a foolish and vain cauill whereby the aduersaries goe about to burden vs, when as they say that we diminish the power of God: nay rather they transforme God when they holde that his counsell & purpose can bee altered. The Pelagians did in times past in like sort burthen Augustine. Hee aunswareth, that though it bee a thing possible that the law shoulde be fulfilled, yet is that sufficient for him, that no man did euer fulfill it, and that the Scripture doth not testifie that it shall bee fulfilled

Gen. 8. 21.

Rom. 8. 7.

Psal. 14. 3.

Rom. 3. 11.

fulfilled vntill the end of the worlde. By which wordes hee deliuereth himselfe from their importunate subtiltie. But there was no cause why he should doubt, but freely and flatly graunt, that it might be fulfilled, the holy ghost being the author. For we must limit the grace of the spirit that it may agree with the promises. Furthermore, we haue already declared how farre the promises reache. There is no man which moueth any question concerning this, whether god be not able if he wil, to make men perfect: but they dote foolishly which separate his power from his counsell, whereof they haue an euident & plaine testimonie in the scripture. God doeth plainly declare an hundred times what hee will and what he hath determined to doe, to goe any farther is sacrilege. Hierom was enforced by reason of philosophie to hurl out the thunderbolt of his curse against Peter and Paule: because the lawes must bee applied vnto their habilitie for whom they be appointed, which as I confesse to take place in mans lawes: so I vtterly denie that it is good as touching the lawe of God, which in exacting righteousness doth not respect what man is able to doe, but what he ought to doe. Though here ariseth a harder question, whether the lawe were not giuen to this end, that it might enforce men to obey God.

And this should be in vain, vnlesse the Spirit of god should direct the faithfull to keepe it; and that solemne protestation of Moses seemeth to put the matter out of doubt, when he saith that hee giueth preceptes to the Iewes: not such as they may read, but in deed fulfill. Deu. 30. Whence we gather that the yoke was laid vpon the necke of the Iewes when the law was giuen, that it might make them subiect to God, that they might not liue as them lusted. I answer, that the lawe is counted a yoke two wayes. For in as much as it bridleth the lustes of the flesh, and deliuereth a rule of godly & holy life, it is meet that the children of God take this yoke vpon them, but in as much as it doth exactly prescribe what we owe to God, and doth not promise life without adding the condition of perfect obedience: and doth againe denounce a curse, if we shall in any point offend: it is a yoke which no man is able to beare. I will shewe this more plainly. The plaine doctrine of good life, wherein God doth inuite vs vnto himselfe, is a yoke, which we must all of vs willingly take vp. For there is nothing more absurd, then that God should not gouerne mans life, but that hee should wander at pleasure without any bridle.

Deu. 30. 12. Therefore we must not refuse the yoke of the law, if the simple doctrine thereof be considered. But these sayings doe otherwise qualifie (that I may so terme it) the law. He which shall do these things shall liue in the, &c. Again, Cursed is hee which continueth not in all things which are written: that it may begin to bee a yoke which no man can beare. For so long as saluation is promised to the perfect keeping of the law alone, & euery transgression is called into iudgement, mankind is vtterly vndoone. In this respect doeth Peter affirme that God is tempted, when mans arrogancie doth burthen the consciences of men with the Lawe. For it is not his purpose to denie, but that men must be gouerned by the doctrine of the lawe, and so he graunteth that they be vnder the law not simply

Leuit. 18. 5.
Deu. 27. 26.

Simply to teach, but also to humble men with the gilt of eternall death, considering that that qualitie was annexed vnto deſuyn, be aſſimeth that the ſoules of the godly muſt not be tied with the yoke of the lawe: becauſe by this meanes it ſhoulde of neceſſitie come to paſſe that they ſhould be drowned in eternall deſtruction. But when as not only the grace of the holy Spirit is preſent, to gouerne vs, but alſo free forgiueneſſe of ſinnes to deliuer and acquit vs from the curſe of the Lawe: then is that of Moſes fulfilled, that the commandement is not aboue vs: and then doe we alſo perceiue how ſweet the yoke of Chriſt is, & how light his burden is. For becauſe we know that through the mercy of God that is forgiuen vs, which is wanting through the infirmities of the fleſh, Wee doe cheerefully and without any griefe take vpon vs that which hee ioyneth vs. Wherefore ſo that the rigour of the lawe be taken away the doctrine of the Lawe ſhall not only be tollerable, but alſo ioyfull & pleaſant: neither muſt we reſuſe the bridle which doth gouerne vs mildly: & doth not vrge vs ſorer then is expedient.

II By the grace of Ieſus Chriſt. Peter compareth theſe two together as contrary the one to the other: to haue hope in the grace of Chriſt, & to be vnder the yoke of the law. Which compariſon doth greatly ſet out the iuſtification of Chriſt, in as much as we gather thereby, that thoſe are iuſtified by faith, who beeing free and quit from the yoke of the lawe, ſeek for ſaluation in the grace of Ieſus Chriſt. Furthermore, I ſaid before that the yoke of the lawe is made of two coardes. The former is, He which doth theſe things ſhall liue in them. The other, Curſed is euery one, which doth not continue in all the commandements. Let vs returne vnto the contrarie member. If we cannot otherwiſe attaine vnto ſaluation by the grace of Chriſt, vnleſſe the yoke of the lawe be taken away: it followeth, that ſaluation is not placed in keeping the law, neither are thoſe which beleue in Chriſt ſubiect to the curſe of the lawe. For if he could be ſaued through grace, who is as yet inwrapped in the yoke of the lawe, then ſhould Peters reaſoning be but fooliſhe, which is drawn from contraries, thus, We hope for ſaluation by the grace of Chriſt: therefore we are not vnder the yoke of the lawe. Vnleſſe ther were a diſagreement between the grace of Chriſt and the yoke of the law, Peter ſhould deceiue vs.

Wherefore thoſe muſt needs depart from the righteouſneſſe of the law, whoſeuer deſire to finde life in Chriſt. For this contrarietie appertaineth not vnto doctrine: but vnto the cauſe of iuſtification. Whereby is alſo reſuted their ſuſmiſe, who ſay that we are iuſtified by the grace of Chriſt: becauſe he regenerateth vs by his Spirit, & giueth vs ſtrength to fulfil the law: thoſe who imagin this, though they ſeem to eaſe the yoke of the law a little, yet they keep ſoules bound with both the cordes thereof. For this promiſe ſhall alwayes ſtand in force, He which ſhall do theſe thinges ſhall liue in them, on the other ſide, the curſe ſhall com vpon all which ſhall not abſolutely fulfill the lawe. Wherefore wee muſt define the grace of Chriſte farre otherwiſe (whereunto the hope of ſaluation leaneth) then they dreame: to wit, that it bee free reconciliation gotten by

Deut. 30. 11

Mat. 11. 30.

by the sacrifice of his death: or which is all one, free forgiuenes of sins, which by pacifying and appeasing God, doth make him of an enemy or seuerer iudge, and which cannot be pleased, nor intreated, a mercifull father. I confesse indeed that we be regenerate into newnes of life by the grace of Christ: but when we are about assurance of saluation, then must we call to mind the free adoptiō alone, which is ioined with the purging & forgiuenesse of sins. For if workes be admitted, that they may make vs righteous euen in part only, the yoke of the law shall not be broken, and so Peter his contrarietie shall fall to the ground, or els be dissolued.

Euen as they. Peter doth testifie in this place, that though the seruitude of the law were laid vpon the Fathers as touching the externall shew: yet were their consciences free and quit: whereby is put away that absurditie, which might otherwise haue troubled godlie minds not alittle. For seeing that the couenant of life is eternall, and the same which God made with his seruants from the beginning vntill the end of the world: it were an absurd thing & vntollerable that any other way to obtain saluation should be taught at this day, then that which the fathers had in times past. Therefore Peter affirmeth that we agree very wel with the fathers: because they no lesse then we reposed hope of saluation in the grace of Christ. And so reconciling the law and the gospel together, as touching the end of the doctrine, he taketh from the Iewes the stumbling block, which they feigned to themselues by reason of the discord. Whereby it appeareth that the lawe was not giuen to the fathers, that they might thereby purchase saluation: neither wer the ceremonies added, that by the obseruing thereof they might attain vnto righteousness: but this was the only end of all the whole lawe, that casting from them all confidence, which they might repose in workes, they might repose all their hope in the grace of Christ. Whereby is also refuted the doting of those who thinke that the old people in as much as they were content with earthly goods, did think no whit of the heauēly life. But Peter maketh the fathers partners with vs of the same faith: and doth make saluation common to both, and yet there bee some which delight in that brainicke fellow Seruetus with his so filthy sacrileges. Furthermore we must note that Peter teacheth that the faith of the fathers was alwaies grounded in Christ, seeing that they could neither finde life any where els, neither was there any other way for men to come vnto God. Therefore this place agreeth with that saying of the Apostle, Christ yesterday and to day, and for euer.

Heb. 13. 8.

- 12 And all the multitude kept silence, and heard Barnabas and Pausle declare, what signes & wonders God had wrought by them among the Gentiles,
- 13 And after that they had done speaking, Iames answered, saying, Men & brethren heare me:
- 14 Simeon hath shewed how at the first God hath visited that he might take of the Gentiles a people in his name.
- 15 And herewith agree the wordes of the prophetes, as it is written.
- 16 After these thinges I will returne, and will builde againe the Tabernacle of Dauid,

David; which is decayed, and I will restore the ruines thereof, and will see it rep.

17. *That the men which remaine may seeke the Lorde, and all nations which call upon my name, saith the Lord which doth all these things.*
 18. *Knownen from the beginning are all his workes.*

12. *All the multitude held their peace.* By these wordes Luke giueth vs to vnderstand that the Spirit of God did so reigne in that assembly, that they yeelded forthwith to reason. The disputation was what before, but now after that Peter hath laid open the counsel of God, & hath handeled the question according to the doctrine of the scripture, by & by all noyse being stayed, they are quiet and whist, who did of late vnadvisedly defend the errour. This is a liuely image of a lawfull counsel, where the truth of God alone so soone as it is once come to light, maketh an end of all controuersies: and assuredly it is effectually enough to appease all discorde, when the Spirit beareth the chieff sway: because he is againe a fit gouernour, as well to moderate their tongues who must speake before other, as to keepe the rest vnder obedience, that they bee not too much addicted to themselues, and wedded to their owne willes, but that laying away stubbornnesse they may shew themselues obedient to god. Neither is it to be doubted but that there was some few which would not yeeld, as it falleth out in a great assembly: yet the truth of GOD had the vpper hand, so that the silence whereof Luke speaketh, was a manifest testimonie of common obedience. And this was no small moderation in Peter, in that hauing suffered euery one to say for himselfe what he coule: he deferred his iudgement (least it should bee preiudiciall to others) so long, vntill the question had bin throughly discussed too and fro.

They heard Barnabas and Paul. We may gather by these words that they were not heard with silence before. For seeing that the more part was perswaded that they did wickedlie admit the profane Gentiles into the church, there should nothing which they should haue said, haue been patiently receiued vntill this false opinion were corrected & reformed: but all should haue been taken at the worst. Wee see what a poyson displeasure conceiued for no cause, is, which doth so possesse mens mindes, that it stoppeth the way so, that the truth can neuer haue entrance. Hereby we learne how true that saying is, all things are sound to the sounde, for there is nothing so wholsome but corrupt affections do turne the same in to that which is hurtfull. And to this end tendeth the narration made by Paul and Barnabas, that they may shew & proue that God doth allowe their Apostleship among the Gentiles: forasmuch as it was ratified and confirmed by myracles which are as it were certaine scales thereof.

13. *James answered saying.* Some old writers of the church, think that this James was one of the disciples, whose surname was Iustus and Obliu, whose cruel death is recorded by Iosephus in the twentieth booke of his antiquities. But would to God the olde writers had travelled rather to know the man, thā to set forth with feined praises the holines

Of a man whom they knew not. It is a childish toy & surmise, in that they say that it was lawful for him alone to enter into the most holy place. For if in that entring in there had bin any religiō, he had done it contrary to the law of God forasmuch as he was not the highest Priest. Secondly, it was a superstitious thing thus to foster the shadowe worshippinge of the Temple. I omit other trifles. And they are greatly deceiued in that they deny that he was one of the 12. Apostles. For they are enforced to confesse that it is he whom Paul commendeth so honourably, that hee maketh him the chiefe among the three pillars of the church. Assuredly a man inferiour in order and degree could neuer haue excelled the Apostles so faire. For Paul giueth him the title of an Apostle. Neither is that worth the hearing which Hierome bringeth, that the worde is generall there: seeing that the dignitie of the order is there handled, for as much as Christe did preferre the Apostles before other Teachers of the church.

Gal. 2.9.

Moreouer, we may gather out of this place, that they made no small account of Iames: forasmuch as hee doth with his voice and consent so confirme the wordes of Peter, that they are all of his minde. And we shal see afterwārd how great his authoritie was at Ierusalē. The olde writers think that this was because he was bishop of the place, but it is not to be thought that the faithfull did at their pleasure change the order which Christ had appointed. Wherefore I do not doubt but that he was sonne to Alphieus, & Christes cousin: in which sense hee is also called his brother. Whether he wer bishop of Ierusalē or no, I leaue it indifferent, neither doeth it greatly make for the matter, saue only because the impudencie of the pope is hereby refuted, because the decree of the counsell is set downe rather at the appointment, and according to the authority of Iames then of Peter. And assuredly Eusebius in the beginning of his second book, is not afraid to cal Iames whosoeuer he wer, the Bishop of the Apostles. Let the men of Rome goe now & boast that their Pope is head of the vniuersall church, because he is Peters successour, who suffered another to rule him, if we beleue Eusebius.

Cha. 21. 18.

Men and brethren, heare me. Iames his oration consisteth vppon two principall members. For first he confirmeth and proueth the calling of the gentiles by the testimony of the prophet Amos, secondly he sheweth what is best to be don, to nourish peace & cōcord among the faithfull, yet so that the liberty of the gentiles may cōtinue safe & sound, & that the grace of Christ may not be darkened. Whereas Peter is in this place called Simeon, it may be that this name was diuersly pronounced then. Whereas he saith that God did visit to take a people of the Gentiles, it is referred vnto the mercy of God, whereby hee vouchsafed to receiue strangers into his familie. It is in deed a harsh phrase, yet such as containeth a profitable doctrine, because hee maketh God the authour of the calling of the Gentiles, and pronounceth that it is through his goodness, that they began to be reckoned among his people, when he saith that they were taken by him; but he proceedeth further, when he saith that he did visit that he might take. For this is his meaning, that, at such time

time as the Gentiles were turned away from God, hee did mercifully looke vpon them : because we can doe nothing but depart farther and farther from him, vntill such time as his fatherly look preuent vs, of his owne accord.

In his name. The old interpreter hath, To his name, which is almost all one: though the preposition *epi* may be otherwise translated: to wit: For his name, or vpon his name. Neither shal the sense disagree, that the saluation of the Gentiles is grounded in the power or name of god, and that God did respect no other thing in calling them, but his own glory: yet did I retaine that which is more vsuall: to wit, that in numbring them among his people, he would haue them counted in his name, like as it shalbe said shortly after, that his name is called vpon by all those, whom he gathereth together into his church. The aduerbe of time *proton*, may be expounded two wayes: if you read it: first, as the old interpreter and Erasmus haue it, the sense shalbe that Cornelius and others, were as it were the first frutes, at who God began the calling of the Gentiles: but it may be taken also comparitiuely, because there was already some token of the adoption of the Gentiles shewed in Cornelius and his cosins before that Barnabas and Paul preached the gospel to the Gentiles. And I do better like this latter sense.

15 *Heere to agree the wordes of the prophets.* Wee see now, how the Apostles tooke nothing to themselues imperiously, but did reuerently follow that which was prescribed in the word of God. Neither did it greue them, neither did they count it any disgrace to them to professe themselves to be the scholars of the scripture. Also wee must here note that the vse of the doctrine of the prophets is yet in force, which some brain-sicke men would banish out of the church. By citing the prophets in the plurall number, to be witnesses, whereas he doth allcage one place only, hee signifieth that there is such an agreement among them, that that which is spoken by one, is the common testimonie of them all, because they speake all with one mouth, and euery one speaketh as in the person of all, or rather the spirit of God speaketh in them all. Moreouer the Oracles of all the prophetes were gathered together, that they might make one bodie. Wherefore that might worthily and fitly be ascribed to all the prophets in generall, which was taken out of som one part of the generall booke.

16 *After these things I will returne.* Because the place is not cited word for word as it is in the prophet, we must see what difference there is: though it be not necessary to examin straitly what diuersitie there is in the wordes, so it appeare that the prophesie doeth fitly agree with the matter which is in hand. After that God hath promised the restoring of the tabernacle of Dauid, he saith also, that he will bring to pas, that the Iewes shall possesse the remnants of Edom. In all that text there appeareth nothing as yet, whence the calling of the gentiles can be set or gathered: but that which followeth immediatly after in the prophet, concerning the remnant of the Gentiles, which shall call vpon the name of the Lord, doeth plainly shewe that the Iewes & Gentiles shall make one

church, because that which was then proper to the Iewes alone, is giue to both in generall. For God placeth the Gentiles in like degree of honour with the Iewes, when he wil haue them to call vpon his name. Those of Idumea and the people there about were in times past vnder Dauid, subiect to the Iewes, but though they were tributaries to the people of God, yet were they neuertheless strangers from the church. Therefore this was newes & a strange thing, in that God reckoneth them vp with the holy people, that he may be called the God of the al. Seing that it is certaine that they are all made equall in honour among themselves by this meanes. Whereby it doth plainly appeare how well the testimonie of the prophet agreeth with the present purpose. For God promisseth to restore the decayed Tabernacle, wherein the Gentiles shall obey the kingdome of Dauid, not only that they may pay tribute, or take weapon at the kings commaundement: but that they may haue one god, & that they may be one family to him: yet there may a question be moued, why he had rather cite this prophesie, then many other, which contain more plentiful proof of the matter which he hath in hand, of which sort Paul citeth many. I answer first that the apostles wer not ambitious in heaping vp places of scripture: but they did simply ayme at this, which was sufficient for them: to wit, that they might proue that their doctrine was take out of the word of god. Secodly, I say that this prophesie of Amos is more plain then it is commonly taken to be. The prophet intreateth of the restoring of an house which was decayed, he describeth the miserable ruine thereof. Therefore the promise, which is added immediately, that the seat & throne shalbe set vppe againe, from of which, kings of the posteritie of Dauid shal rule ouer the Gentiles, doth properly appertain vnto Christ. Therefore so sone as the kingdome of Christ is set vp, that must needs folow which the prophete saith also, that the Gentiles shal call vpon the name of God. Now we see that Iames did not vnadvisedly make choise of this place. For if the kingdome of Christ cannot be otherwise established, vnlesse god be called vpo euery wher throughout the whole world, & the Gentiles grew together to be one with his holy people, it is an absurd thing that they should be driuen from hope of saluation, and the middle wall must fal to the ground, wherwith the one was separate from the other vnder the law. The first word, *I will returne*, is not in the prophet: but the change of the state which he denounceth, is very well expressed by this meanes.

Rom. 15. 9.
10. 11.

Ephc. 2. 14.

The tabernacle of Dauid which was decayed. It is not without cause, that that euill fauoured wastnes & ruine of the kings house is set before our eyes by the prophet. For vnlesse the godly should haue been perswaded, that Christ should notwithstanding come, though the kingdome of Dauid were brought to nought, who should not only restore to their old order, things whiche were decayed: but shoulde exalt euen vnto the heauens the glory of his kingdome with incomparable successe, they should haue dispayred and hundreth times in a day. After they were returned from the exile, wherein they liued at Babylon, they were brought by continuall destructions almost vnto ytter destruction. Afterward that

which

which remained was consumed by little & little with ciuill discorde, yea when God did relecue their miseries, that kind of help which they had, was a certain matter of despair: for that rule which the Machabees took vpon the, was then taken away from the tribe of Iuda. For these causes the Spirite of god doth diligently beat in this by the prophet, that Christ shall not come, vntill the kingdome of Dauid shall perish: that they may not despai of saluation euen amidst greatest miseries. So Iſaias saith, that there shall a branch arise out of the contemptible & base stock: and let vs also remember, that God doth obserue this wonderfull way in restoring the church, that he doth builde it vp when it is decayed. Furthermore this place teacheth, when the church is best ordered & what is the true and right constitution thereof: to wit, when the throne of Dauid is set vp, & Christ alone hath the preheminence, that all may meet together in his obedience.

Iſai. 11.

Though the Pope haue oppressed the Church with his sacrilegious tyrannie, yet doth he make boast of the title of the church: yea he deceiueth men vnder the vaine title of the church, that he may put out the cleere light of sound doctrine. But if we shall come throughly to examine the matter, we may easily refute such a grosse mock: because he alone beareth rule hauing deposed Christ. He doth in word confesse that he is Christs vicar: but in very deed after that he hath by a beautiful banishment sent Christ into the heauens, he taketh to himself al his power. For Christ reigneth by the doctrine of his gospel alone, which is wickedly troden vnderfoot by this abominable idol. But let vs remember that this shalbe the lawfull estate of the church among vs, if we doe all in generall obey Christ the king of kings, that there may be one sheepfold & one shepheard.

Ioh. 10. 16.

17 *That those which remain may seek.* Iames added this word *seek*, by way of exposition, which is not found nor read in the prophet: & yet it is not superfluous: because to the end wee may be numbred among the people of god, & that he may take vs for his owne, we must on the other side be encouraged to seek him. And it is to be thought that Luke did summarily comprehend those things wherof Iames did dispute in his owne language among the Iewes: wherby it came to passe that the expositiō of the matter was mixed with the words of the prophet. In steed of the reliques of the Gētiles which Amos vseth, Luke out of the Greek translatiō (which was more familiar) putteth the rest of the men in the same sense: to wit, that ther must go before the purging of the filthines of the world, a cutting, pruning, or paring: as it came to passe. And this doctrine must be also applied vnto our time. For because the corruption of the worlde is worse, the that it can be wholly brought to obey Christ, he bloweth away with diuers fannes of tribulations the chaff and weedes, that he may at length gather vnto himself that which shall remaine.

18 *Known from the beginning.* This is a preuention to put away the hatred which might haue risen vpon the noueltie. For the sodaine change might haue beenie suspected: and therefore did it trouble weak minds. Therefore Iames preuenteth, shewing that this was no new thing

with god, though it fell out sodainly otherwise then mé thoghr. Because god saw before the world was created, what he wold do, & the calling of the Gentiles was hidden in his secret counsell. Whereupon it followeth that it must not be esteemed according to the sense of man. Furthermore Iames hath respect vnto the wordes of the prophet, when he affirmeth that God who should do all these things, was also the authour of the prophesie. Therefore his meaning is, that seeing god speaketh by his prophet: he saw then, yea from the very beginning, that neither vncircumcision nor any thing els should let him, but that he would chose the Gentiles into his family. Neuertheles ther is comprehended vnder this a general exhortation, that men do not take vpon them to measure with the small measure of their wit, the workes of God, the reason whereof is oftentimes known to none but to himself. But rather let them crie being astonied, that his wayes are past finding out, and that his iudgements are too deepe a deapth.

Rom. 11. 33

- 19 *Wherefore I think that we ought not to trouble those who of the Gentiles are turned to God.*
 20 *But that we must write vnto them that they abstaine from the filthinesse of Images, and from fornication, and from strangled and from blood,*
 21 *For Moses of olde time, hath those in every citie which preach him, when hee is read in the Synagogues every Sabbooth day.*

19 *That we must not trouble.* He denieth that the Gentiles must be driuen from the Church through the disagreement about ceremonies seeing they were admitted by God: yet it seemeth contrary to himselfe, when he denieth that they ought to be troubled, & yet prescribeth certain rites. The answer is easie, which I will hereafter more at large prosecute. First, he requireth nothing at their handes, but that which they were bound to do by brotherly concord: secondly, these precepts coulde no whit trouble or disquiet their consciences, after that they knew that they were free before God, and that false and peruers religion was take away, which the false Apostles sought to bring in. The question is now, why Iames doth inioyne the Gentiles these foure things alone. Some say that this was set from the auncient custom of the fathers, who did not make any couenāt with any people, which they could inforce to obey the, but vpon this condition. But because there is no fit authour of that thing brought to light, I leaue it in doubt & vndecided. But heere appeareth a manifest reason why they gaue particular comādemēt concerning things offered to Idols, blood, & that which was strangled. They were in deed of theselues things indifferent: yet such as had som special thing in the, more thā other rites of the law. We know how straitly the Lord comādemeth to eschew those things which are contrary to the externall profession of faith, & wherein there is any appearance or suspitiō of Idolatry. Therfore least there should any blot of superstitiō remain in the gentiles, & least the Iewes should see any thing in the which did not agree with the pure worship of god, no maruel if to auoid offence they be

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commanded to abstaine from things offered to Idols. The worde *allogena* which Luke vseth doth signifie all maner of profanation: therefore I haue not changed the common translation, which hath pollution or filthines. Yet it is sometime taken for sacrifices: which sense shoulde not disagree with Iames his purpose, & peraduenture it shall be more plaine and naturall so to expounde it in this place: because where Luke doeth shortly after repeat the same decree, he will put *Idolothya*, or things sacrificed to Idols. As concerning blood and that which was strangled not only the Iewes were forbidden by the law of Moses to eat them: but this law was giuen to all the world after the flood, whereby it came to passe that those which were not quite growen out of kinde, did loath blood. I do not only speake of the Iewes but of many of the Gentiles. I confesse indeed that euen that commandement was but temporal: yet notwithstanding it was extended farther then vnto one people. No manuell therefore if ther might arise greater offence thereupō, which to cure seemed good to the apostles. But there ariseth a harder question concerning fornication: because Iames seemeth to reckon the same among things indifferent, whereof they must beware only in respect of offence. But there was another cause for which he placed fornicatiō among those things which were not of theselues vnlawfull. It is wel known what vnbrideled libertie to run a whoring did reigne & rage euery where: and this disease had gotten the vpper hand principally among the men of the East countrie: as they be more giuen to lust: assuredly the faith and chastitie of wedlocke was neuer lesse obserued and kept any where then among them. Moreouer, hee doeth not intreat indifferently in my iudgement in this place, of all maner fornication or whoredome, as of adulterie and wandering and vnbrideled lusts, whereby all chastitie is violatē and corrupt: but I think he speaketh of concubineship as they call it: which was so common among the Gentiles, that it was almost like to a lawe. Therefore whereas Iames reckoneth vp a common corruptiō among things which are of theselues not corrupt, there is therein no inconuenience: so that we know that it was not his meaning to place those things in one order which are very far vnlike among theselues. For whereas vnclean men do thereby colour and cloke their filthinesse, they may easily bee refuted. Iames saith, they coupled eating of blood with whoredome: but doth he compare them together as things that are like, at least which disagree not in any point. Yea he doth only respect the wicked and corrupt custome of men, which was fallen away from the first law and order of nature appointed by God. As concerning the iudgement of god the knowledge thereof must be fet out of the continual doctrine of the scripture: & it is nothing doubtful what the scripture saith: to wit, that whoredome is accursed before God, and that the soule and body are thereby defiled: that the holy temple of God is polluted, & Christ is rent in peeces: that God doth dayly punish whoremongers, and that he will once pay them home. The filthinesse of whoredome which the heauenly iudge doth so sore condemne, can be couered with no cloakes by the patrons of whoredome, how witty and eloquent soeuer they be.

Deut. 12. 23.
Gen. 9. 4.

21 For Moses hath. This place in my iudgement hath been badly expounded, and drawne into a contrary sense: For interpreters thinke that Iames added this, because it wer superfluous to prescribe any thing to the Iewes, who were well acquainted with the doctrine of the lawe, & to whō it was read euery Sabboth day: and they picke out this meaning, Let vs be content to require these few things at the hands of the Gentiles, which are not accustomed to beare the yoke of the lawe: as touching the Iewes, they haue Moses out of whom they may learne more. Some doe also gather out of this place, that circumcision with his appurtenances ought to be obserued euen at this day among the Iewes. But they reason vnfitly and vnskillfully, though that exposition which I haue set downe were true. But Iames had a farre other meaning: to wit, he teacheth that it cānot be, that ceremonies cā be abolished so quickly as it were at the first dash: because the Iewes had now a long time been acquainted with the doctrine of the lawe, and Moses had his preachers: therefore it stood them vpon to redeeme concord for a short time, vntil such time as the libertie gotten by Christ, might by little & little appear more plainely: this is that which is said in the common prouerb, that it was meete that the old ceremonies should be buried with some honor. Those who are skillfull in the Greek tounge shall know that that last member, When he is read euery Sabboth day in the Synagogues, was by mee changed not without cause, for auoiding of doubtfulness.

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles & Elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, Iudas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.

23 Sending letters by their hands after this forme: The Apostles and Elders and Brethren, to those brethren which are at Antioch, & in Syria, and Cilicia which are of the Gentiles, greeting,

24 Because we haue heard that certaine which went out from vs haue troubled you with wordes, subverting your soules, commanding you to be circumcised, and to keepe the law, to whom we gaue no commandement,

25 It seemed good to vs being gathered together with one mind, to sende chosen men to you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul:

26 Men which haue returned their soules for the name of our Lord Iesus Christ.

27 Therefore we haue sent Iudas & Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by worde of mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the holy ghost and vs, to lay no greater burthen vpon you then these necessarie things.

29 That ye abstaine from those things which are sacrificed to Images, and from blood, & from that which is strangled; and from fornication: from which things if you shall keep your selues, yee shal do wel, Fare ye well.

22 It pleased the Apostles, That tempest was made calme not without the singular grace of god, so that after the matter was thoroughly discussed, they did all agree together in sounde doctrine. Also the modestie of the common people is gathered by this, because after that they had referred the matter to the iudgement of the apostles & the rest of teachers, they do now also subscribe to their decree: & on the other side, the apostle:

apostles did shew some token of their equitie, in that they set downe nothing concerning the common cause of al the godly, without admitting the people. For assuredly this tyrannie did spring frō the pride of the pastors, that those things which appertain vnto the common state of the whol church, are subiect (the people being excluded) to the wil, I wil not say lust, of a few. We know what a hard matter it is to suppress the slanders of the wicked, to satisfie most men who are churlish and froward, to keep vnder the light & vnskilful, to wipe away errors conceiued, to heal vp hatred, to appease cōtētions, to abolish fals reports. Peraduenture the enemies of Paul & Barnabas might haue said, that they had gotten letters by fair and flattering speeches: they might haue inuented som new caull: the rude and weake might by and by haue beene troubled. But when chiefe men come with the letters, that they may grauely dispute the whole matter in presence, all sinister suspicion is taken away.

24 *Certain which went out frō vs.* We see that there was no respect of persons among these holy men: which doth alwayes corrupt sound & right iudgements. They confesse that there wer knaues of their own cōpany: & yet they do no whit flatter the, or through corrupt fauour incline to couer their error, yea rather in condemning them freely, they spare not euen theselues. And first they pluck frō their faces that visure, which they had abused, to deceiue withal. They boasted that they were priuie to the meaning of the apostles: the apostles reprove them & condemn them of & for lying in that false pretence: when they vtterly denie that they did eōmand any such thing: againe, they accuse them far more sharply, that they troubled the church, & subuerted soules. For by this means they bring them in contempt & detestation with the godly, because they cānot be admitted but to their destruction. But false teachers are said to subuert soules, because the truth of god doth edifie or build them vp, and so this speech containeth a general doctrine, vnlesse we will willingly haue our soules drawen headlong frō being any longer temples of the holy ghost, & vnlesse we desire their ruine, we must beware of those, which go about to lead vs away from the pure gospel. That which they say touching the keeping of the law, doth only appertain vnto ceremonies: though we must alwaies remember, that they did so intreat of ceremonies, that both the saluation, and also the righteousness of men did therein consist. For the false apostles did command that they should bee kept, as if righteousness came by the law, and saluation did depend vpon workes.

25 *With our beloved Barnabas & Paul.* They set these praises against the slanders wherwith the false apostles had assayed to bring Paul & Barnabas out of credit. And first to the end they may remōoue the opinion of disagreement which had possessed the minds of many, they testifie their consent: secondly, they commend Paul & Barnabas for their seruencies in zeale, & most manlike courage, that they wer not afraid to venture or lay down their soules for Christs sake. And this is an excellent vertue in a minister of the gospel, & which deserueth no smal praise, if he shal not only be stout and couragious to execute the office of teaching: but also be readie to enter danger which is offered in defence of his doctrine.

Gal. 6. 17.

As the Lorde doth thus trie the faith and constancie of those which bee his: so he doth as it were make them noble with the ensignes of vertue, that they may excell in his church. Therefore Paule holdeth forth the marks of Christ which he did bear in his body, as a buckler to driue back those knaues which did trouble his doctrin. And though it do not so fall out with most stout and couragious teachers & preachers of the gospel, that they striue for the Gospel vntill they come in danger of life, because the matter doth not so require: yet is this no let but that Christe may purchase authoritie for his martyrs, so often as he bringeth them into worthe & renowned conflicts. Neuertheles, let euē those who are not inforced to enter cumbat by any necessity, be redy to shead their blood if god see it good at any time that it should be so. But the apostles commend the fortitude of Paul & Barnabas only in a good cause, because if it wer sufficient to enter dangers manfully, the martyrs of Christe shoulde nothing differ from troublesome & frensie men, from cutters and roysters. Therefore Paul and Barnabas are commended, not because they laid open themselues simply to dangers, but because they refuse not to die for Christes sake. Peraduenture also the apostles meant to nip those knaues by the way, who hauing neuer suffered any thing for Christes sake, came out of their roust and dainties to trouble the churches, which cost the couragious souldiars of Christ deere ly.

28 *It seemed good to the holy ghost and to vs.* Whereas the Apostles and Elders match & ioyne themselues with the holy ghost, they attribute nothing to themselues apart therein: but this speech importeth as much as if they should say, that the holy ghost was the captaine, guide & gouernour: and that they did set downe and decreed that which they write as he did indite it to them. For this maner of speeche is vsed commonly in the scripture: to giue the ministers the second place after that the name of God is once expressed. When it is said that the people beleueed God and his seruant Moses, faith is not rent in peeces, as if it did additt it self partly to God & partly to mortall man. What then? to wit, wheteas the people had God for the sole author of their faith, they beleueed or gaue credence to his minister from whom he could not be separate. Neither could they otherwise beleue god, then by beleueing the doctrine set before the by Moses: as they did shake off the yoke of God, after that they had once reiecte & despised Moses. Wherby the wickednes of those men is also refuted, who making boast of faith with full mouth, do no lesse wickedly then proudly contemne the ministerie. For as it wer a sacrilegious partition, if faith should depend euen but a very little vpon man: so those men do openly mock god, who feign that they haue him to be their teacher, when they set nought by the ministers by whom he speaketh. Therefore the apostles deny that they inuēted that decree of their own brain which they deliuer to the Gentiles, but that they wer onely ministers of the Spirit, that they may with the authoritie of god make them comendable which (proceeding frō him) they do faithfully deliuer. So whē Paul maketh mention of his gospel, he doth not enforce vpon the a new gospel, which is of his owne inuenting, but hee preacheth that which was committed to him by Christe.

Exo. 14. 31.

And the papistes are doltish who go about out of these words to proue, that the Church hath some authoritie of her owne: yea they are contrarie to themselves. For vnder what colour do they auouch that the Church cannot erre: saue onely because it is grounded immediatlie by the holy spirit? Therefore they crie out with open mouth that those thinges bee the oracles of the spirit, which wee proue to be their owne inuentions. Therefore they do foolishly vrge this clause, It seemed good to vs, because if the Apostles decreed any thing apart from the Spirit, that principall maxime shall fall to ground, That Councils decree nothing but that which is indited by the Spirit.

Besides these necessarie things. The Papists doe frowardly triumph vnder colour of this worde, as if it were lawfull for men to make Lawes which may lay necessitie vpon the conscience. That (say they) which the church commaundeth must be kept vnder paine of mortall sinne: because the Apostles say that that must necessarily be obserued which they decree. But such a vaine cauill is quickly answered. For this necessitie reached no farther than there was any danger least the vnitie shoulde bee cut a sunder. So that to speake properly, this necessitie was accidental or external: which was placed not in the thing it selfe, but onely in auoiding of the offence, which appeareth more plainly by abolishing of the decree. For Lawes made concerning thinges which are of themselves necessarie, must be continual. But we know that this Law was foredone by Paul, so soone as the tumult and contention was once ended, when he teacheth that nothing is vncleane, and when he granteth libertie to eat all manner meates, yea euen such as were sacrificed to Idols. Wherefore in vaine doe they gather any cloake or colour out of this worde, to binde mens consciences, seeing that the necessitie spoken of in this place, did onely respect men in the externall vse, least there shoulde any offence rise thereupon: and that their libertie before God might stand whole and sound. Also in vaine do they gather out of all the whole place, and in vaine do they go about out of the same to proue that the church had power giuen to decree any thing contrary to the word of God. The Pope hath made such lawes as seemed best to him contrary to the word of God, whereby he meant to gouerne the Church: and that not tenne or twentie, but an infinite number: so that they do not onely tyrannously oppresse soules: but are also cruell torments to vex and torment the. To the ende the hyred brabiers of the Pope may excuse such crueltie, they do obiekt that euen the Apostles did forbid the Gētiles that which was not forbidden in the word of God. But I say flatly that the Apostles added nothing vnto the word of God. Which shall plainly appeare, if we list to marke their drift. I said of late that they meant nothing lesse then to set downe a perpetuall law, whereby they might bind the faithfull. What then? They vse that remedy which was fit for the nourishing of brotherly peace and concorde among the Churches: that the Gentiles may for a time applie themselves to the Iewes. But if we wil grant any thing, we must assuredly confesse that this is according to the word of God, that loue beare the sway in things indifferent: that is, that the

Rom. 14. 14.

1. Cor. 10. 25

exter-

externall vse of those things which are of themselves free, be bent vnto the rule of charitie. In summe, if loue be the bonde of perfection and end of the Law, if God commande that wee studie to preserue mutuall vniuity among our selues, and that euery man serue his neighbour to edifie: no man is so ignorant which doeth not see that that is contained in the word of God, which the Apostles commaunde in this place: onelie they applie a generall rule to their time. Furthermore let vs remember that which I said before, that it was a politike Lawe, which coulde not insnare the consciences, neither bring in any feigned worshippe of God: which two vices the scripture condemneth euery where in mens traditions. But admit we should grant (which is most false) that that did not accorde with the word of God which was decreed in that council: yet that maketh nothing for the Papists. Let the Councils decree any thing contrarie to the expresse worde of God, according to the reuelation of the Spirite: Yet none but lawfull Councils may haue this authoritie given them. Then let them prooue that their Councils were godlie and holie, to the decrees whereof they will haue vs subscribe. But I will not any farther prosecute this point, because it was handled in the beginning of the Chapter. Let the readers passe not the boundes of the worde of God, when they set downe an externall Lawe as time requireth, whereby they may reconcile the Churches among themselves.

- 30 Therefore when they were let goe they came to Antioch; and when they had assembled the multitude together, they deliuered the Epistle.
- 31 Which when they had read, they reioyced ouer the consolation.
- 32 And Iudas and Silas, seing they were also Prophets, did with many wordes exhort the brethren, and strengthened them.
- 33 And they tarried there for a time, and then they were let go by the brethren in peace vnto the Apostles.
- 34 But it seemed good to Silas to stay there.
- 35 And Paul and Barnabas staid at Antiochia, teaching and preaching with many mee the word of the Lord.

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did com-
fort.

30 When the multitude was gathered. This was the most lawfull kinde of dealing to admit the whole multitude vnto the reading of the Epistle. For if there fall out any controuersie in the doctrine of faith, it is meet that the iudgement bee referred ouer vnto the learned and godly & to such as are exercised in the Scripture: and chiefly to the pastors rightly ordained. Notwithstanding because it belongeth to all alike to know for a suertie what they must hold, the godly and learned teachers must make known to the whole Church, what they haue set downe out of the worde of God. For there is nothing more vsfitting for holie and Christian order, than to driue away the bodie of the people from common doctrine as if it were a heerd of swine: as they vse to do vnder the tyrannie of popery. For because the Pope & the horned bishops did think that

that the people would neuer bee obedient ynough, vntill they were brought into grosse ignorance, they imagined that this was the best summarie of faith, to know nothing but to depend wholly vpon their decrees. But on the contrarie there must be a meane obserued; that lawfull governments may continue, and that on the other side, the people may haue that liberty which vnto them belongeth, least they be oppressed like slaues.

31 *They reioyced ouer the consolation.* Seing that the Epistle is so short, and containeth nothing but a bare narration, what consolation could they haue by it? But we must note, that there was no small matter of consolation therein, because when they knewe the consent of the Apostles, they were all pacified, and also whereas before there was variance among them, they are now reconciled one to another. Seing there went a false report about, that all the Apostles were against Paul and Barnabas; this same had shaken some who were too light of beliefe: manie did stand in doubt: the wicked abused this occasion to speak euil: other some were pricked forward with loue of noualty and with curiositie, and one was set against another. But now after that they see that the iudgement of the first Church doth agree with the doctrine of Paul and Barnabas, they obtaine that for which the children of God ought most to wish, that being established in the right faith, and being of one mind among themselves, they may with quiet mindes haue peace one with another.

32 *Judas and Silas.* These two brethren were sent for this cause, that they might also testifie the same thing by word which was contained in the letters, and more also. Otherwise the Apostles would not haue sent such short letters concerning so great and weightie a matter: and they would haue also spoken somewhat touching the mysteries of faith, and would haue made some long exhortation, wherein they would haue perswaded them vnto the studie of godlinesse. Nowe Luke sheweth some farther thing by them done: to wit, that being furnished with the gift of Prophecie, they edifie the Church in generall, as if he should say, they did not onely doe their duetie faithfullie in the cause which was now in hande: but they did also take good and profitable paines in teaching and exhorting the Church. And we must note that he saith that they exhorted the Church because they were Prophetes: for it is not a thing common to all men to enter such an excellent function. Therefore we must beware least any man passe his bounds: as Paul teacheth 1. Cor. 7. and Ephesians 4. that euery one keepe himselfe within the measure of grace receiued. Wherefore it is not in vaine that Luke saith that the office of teaching is peculiar: least any man through ambition being void of habilitie, or through rash zeale, or through anie other foolish desire coueting to put out his head, trouble the order of the Church.

They were Prophetes. Whereas the worde hath diuerse significations, it is not taken in this place for those prophetes to whom it was graunted to foretell things to come: because this title should come in out of season when

1. Cor. 7. 20.
Ephes. 4. 1.

1. Cor. 14.3.

when hee intreateth of another matter: but Luke his meaning is that Iudas and Silas were indued with excellent knowledge and vnderstanding of the mysteries of God, that they might be good interpreters of God: as Paul in the fourteenth of the first to the Corinthians, when he intreateth of the prophecie, and preferreth it before al other gifts, speaketh not of foretelling of things to come: but he commendeth it for this fruit, because it doth edifie the Church by doctrine, exhortation, & consolation. After this manner doth Luke assigne exhortation to the Prophets, as being the principall point of their office.

33 *They were let goe in peace.* That is, when they departed, the brethren in taking their leaue of them, did wish them well, as friends vse to doe. And there is Synecdoche in this member: because the one of the two did onely returne to Ierusalem. And in the text there is a correction added immediatly, that it seemed good to Silas to tarrie there: but when Luke ioyneth them both together, his meaning is onely to declare that the Church was quiet before they thought vpon any returning. At length he addeth that Paul and Barnabas so long as they were at Antioch gaue themselves to teaching, and did continue in this work: and yet did they giue place to many mo. Whereby it appeareth that they had al one & the same desire without grudging, so that they ioined had in hand to doe good. Though it seemeth that he maketh mention of many moe offer purpose, least we should thinke that after that Paul and Barnabas were departed, that Church was destitute, which did flourish in abundance of teachers. Moreouer the blessing of God which began streightway to appeare againe in that Church, is now againe commended and extolled, which Church Satan went about by his ministers miserably to scatter and lay wast.

36 *And after a few daies Paul said to Barnabas, Returning let vs now visit our brethren throughout all Cities wherein we haue preached the word of the Lord, and see how they doe.*

37 *And Barnabas counsailed to take Ihon whose surname was Marke.*

38 *But Paul besought him that he which slid backe from them in Pamphilia, and had not gone with them to the worke, might not bee taken to their companie.*

39 *And the contention waxed so hot betweene them, that they parted companie: and Barnabas hauing taken to him Marke, sailed to Cyprus.*

40 *But Paul hauing chosen Silas iorneyed, being committed to the grace of god by the brethren.*

41 *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, establishing the Churches.*

36 *Let vs visit our brethren.* In this historie we must first note how carefull Paul was for the Churches which he had ordained. Hee laboureth in deed at Antiochia profitablie: but because hee remembered that hee was an Apostle ordained of God, and not the pastour of one particular place, hee keepeth the course of his calling. Secondly, as it did not become him to be tied to one place, so he thinketh with himselfe that he

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was bound to all whom he begat in the Lord: therefore he will not suffer them to want his helpe. Moreouer the worke that was begunne in those places could not be neglected, but it woulde shortly after decay. Yet it is to be thought that Paul stayed stil in the Church of Antiochia, vntill he saw the estate thereof well ordered, and concord established. For we knowe and trie what great force principall Churches haue to keepe other lesser Churches in order. If there arise any tumult in an obscure streete, or if there fall out any offence, the rumour goeth not so far, neither are the neighbours so much moued. But if any place be excellent, it cannot quaike without great ruine: or at least but that the lesser buildings shalbe therewith sore shaken both far and wide. Therefore Paul in staying a time at Antioch did prouide for other Churches: and so we must no lesse looke vnto his wisdom than his diligence in this example: because oftentimes the immoderate heat of the Pastours in going about matters, doeth no lesse hurt than their sluggishness.

How they doe. Paul knewe that amidst so great lightnesse and inconstancie of men, and as their nature is inclined to vice, if there be any thing well ordered among them it doeth seldome continue stable & for any long time: and especially that Churches doe easily decay or growe out of kind vnlesse they be looked too continually. There ought nothing vnder heauen to bee more firme, than the spirituall building of faith, whose stabilitie is grounded in the very heauen, yet there be but fewe in whose mindes the worde of the Lorde doth thoroughly take liuely roote: therefore firmnes is rare in men. Againe, euen those who haue their anchor firmly fixed in the trueth of God, doe not cease notwithstanding to be subiect to diuerse tossings: wherby though their faith be not ouerturned yet hath it neede of strengthening that it may be vnderpropped and stayed. Moreouer we see how sathan doeth assault, and with what subtilties hee goeth about priuily to pull downe sometimes whole Churches, sometimes euery one of the faithfull particularly. Therefore it is not without cause that Paul is so carefull for his scholars, least they behaue themselues otherwise, then is to be wished: and therefore is hee desirous in time to preuent, if there be any inconuenience risen: which cannot be vntill he haue taken view.

37 *And Barnabas gaue counsell.* Luke doth here set downe that dolefull disagreement, which ought to make all the godly afraid for iust causes. The societie of Paul and Barnabas was consecrated by the heauenly oracle. They had long time laboured being of one mind, vnder this yoke whereunto the Lord had tied them: they had by many experiences tried the excellent fauour of God. Yea that wonderful successie mentioned heretofore by Luke, was a manifest blessing of God: Though they had bin almost drowned so often in so many tempestes of persecution, and were set vpon so sore by infinite enemies: though domesticall seditions were euery where kindled against them, yet they were so farre from being pulled in sunder, that their agreement was then most of al tried. But now for a light matter, and which might easily haue bin ended, they breake that holy bond of Gods calling. This could not fall out without

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great perturbation to all the godly. Seeing that the heat of the contention was so great and vehement in these holy men, who had long time accustomed themselves to suffer all things: what shall befall vs, whose affections being not as yet so brought to obey God; do oftentimes rage without modestie? Seeing that a light occasion did separate them, who had long time amidst so great trials retained vntity holily, how easily may Satan cause those to be diuided; who haue either none or at least a colde desire to foster peace? What great pride was it for Barnabas, who had no more honorable thing than to be Paul his companion, that he might behaue himselfe like a sonne toward his father, so stubbornly to refuse his counsell? Peraduenture also some might thinke that Paul was not very courteous in that hee did not forgive a faithfull helper this fault. Therefore we be admonished by this example, that vnlesse the seruants of Christ take great heed, there be many chinkes through which Satan will creepe in, to disturbe that concorde which is among them. But now we must examine the cause it selfe. For some there bee who lay the blame of the disagreement vpon Paule: and at the first hearing, the reasons which they bring seeme probable. Iohn Marke is reiect-ed, because he withdrew himselfe from Pauls companie: buried a fell not away from Christ. A yong man being as yet vnacquainted with bearing the crosse, returned home from his iorney. He was somewhat to be born with for his age: being a fresh water soldiari he fainted in troubles euen at the first dash: he was not therefore about to bee a slothfull soldiari during his whole life. Now forasmuch as his returning to Paul is an excellent testimony of repentance, it seemeth to be a point of discourtesie to reiect him. For those must bee handled more courteously, who punish themselves for their owne offences of their owne accord. There were also other causes which ought to haue made Paul more courteous. The house of Iohn Mark was a famous Inne: his mother had intainted the faithfull in most greivous persecution: when Herod & all the people were in a rage; they were wont to haue their secret meetings there: as Luke reported before. Surely he ought to haue borne with such a holy & couragious woman, least immoderate rigor should alienate her: she was desirous to haue her son addicted to preach the gospel, now what a great griefe might it haue bin to her, that his pains & industry should be refused for one light fault? & now whereas Iohn Mark doth not only bewaile his fault, but in very deed amend the same: Barnabas hath a faire colour why he should pardon him. Yet we may gather out of the text, that the Church did allow Pauls counsell. For Barnabas departeth and with his companion hee saileth into Cyprus. There is no mention made of the brethren: as if he had departed priuily without taking his leaue. But the Brethren commend Paul in their prayers to the grace of God: whereby appeareth that the Church stoode on his side. Secondly whereas God sheweth forth the power of his Spirit in blessing Paul, & doth blesse his labours with happy successe of his grace, & leaueth Barnabas as it were buried, there may a probable reason bee drawne thence, that it pleased him that such an example of seueritie should be shewed. And surely the offence

Sup. 12. 12.

offence of Iohn Mark was greater then it is commonly taken for. He slid not backe in deed from the faith of Christ: yet did he forsake his calling, and was a renolt from the same: therefore it was a matter which might haue giuen euill example, if he had bin streightway receiued again into the calling, from which he was slid backe. He had giuen himselfe ouer to serue Christ vpon this condition, that he should be free no longer. It was no more lawfull for him to break his promise made in this behalfe, than it is for a husbando to leaue his wife, or for a son to forsake his father. Neither doth infirmitie excuse his vnfaithfulnes, whereby the holinesse of the calling was violatē. And we must note that he was not altogether reiectēd of Paul: he counted him as a brother, so he would be content with the common order: he refused to admit him vnto the commō function of teaching: from whence he fell filthily through his owne fault. And there is no great difference betweene these two, whether he which hath offended be quite excluded from pardon: or he haue onely publike honor denied him: though it may be that they did both exceed measure, as accidents do oftentimes mar a matter, which is otherwise good. It was wel done of Paul & according to the right of discipline profitably, not to admit him to be his companion, whose inconstancy he had once tried: but when he saw Barnabas so importunate, he might haue yeelded to his desire. We ought to make more account of the truth, than of the fauor of all the whol world: but it is cōuenient that we ponder wisely, what great weight there is in the matter which is in hande. For if in a matter of no weight, or edification a man want of his constancie, prepare himselfe for the cōflict, & cease not to defend that vntil the end, wherein he did once take delight: it shalbe but foolish & peruerse obstinacie. There was also some midle way & meanes whereby Paul might haue granted somwhat to the importunate request of his fellow in office: and yet haue not reuolted from the truth. It was not for him to flatter Mark, or to cloake his offence: yet was he not letted by religion but that after he had freely professed what he thought, he might suffer himself to be ouercome in that matter, which did neither indamage true doctrine, nor indanger mans saluation: which I say for this cause, that we may learne to moderate our desire euen in the best causes, least it passe measure and be too seruēt.

CHAP. XVI.

AND he came to Derby and Lystra: and behold there was there a certain disciple named Timotheus, the sonne of a certaine faithfull woman a Jewesse, and his father was a Grecian.

He was well reported of by the brethren, which were at Lystra and Iconium.

Paul would haue him to go with him: and when he had taken him he circumcised him because of those Iewes which were in those places. For they all knewe that his father was a Grecian.

And as they passed through the Cities, they deliuered to them to bee kept the decrees, which were decreed by the Apostles & Elders, which were at Ierusalem:

And so the Churches were confirmed in the faith, and abounded in number daily.

1 Luke doeth now begin to declare what were the proceedings of Paul after that Barnabas and he were sepeate. And first he sheweth that he took to his company at Lystra, Timothie to be his companion. But to the end we may knowe that Paul did nothing rashly or without good consideration, Luke saith plainly that Timothie was such a man as the brethren did well like of, and that they gaue testimonie of his godlines: for thus doth he speake word for word. And so Paul himselfe obserueth the like choise, which he elsewhere commandeth to be made in choosing ministers. Neither is it to be thought, that those prophecies did euen then come to light wherewith Timothie was set foorth, and adorned by the spirit, as Paul doth testifie elsewhere. But there seemeth to be some disagreement in that, in that Luke saith that Timotheus was well reported off amongst the brethren: and Paul will haue him to haue a good report of those who are without, who is chosen to be a Bishoppe. I answer, that wee must principally looke vnto the iudgement of the godly: as they be sole meete witnesses, and doe alone rightly discern well and wisely according to the Spirit of God: and that we ought to attribute no more to the wicked than to blind men. Therefore it appeareth that godlines and holines of life must bee iudged according to the will and consent of godly men: that he bee counted worthie to be a Bishop, whom they commend. Notwithstanding I confesse that euen this also is required in the seconde place, that the verie infidels be enforced to commend him: least the Church of God come in danger of their slander and euill speaking, if it committe it selfe to bee gouerned by men of euill report.

3 *He Circumcised him because of the Iewes.* Luke doth plainly expresse that Timothie was not circumcised, because it was necessarie it should be so: or because the religion of that signe did continue as yet: but that Paul might auoid an offence. Therefore there was respect had of men, whereas the matter was free before God. Wherefore the circumcising of Timotheus was no sacrament, as was that which was giuen to Abraham and his posterie: but an indifferent Ceremonie, which serued onely for nourishing of loue, and not for any exercise of godlinesse. Nowe the question is, whether it were lawfull for Paule to vse a vaine signe, whose signification and force was abolished: for it seemeth a vain thing when there is a departure made from the institution of God. But Circumcision was commaunded by God to continue onely vntill the comming of Christ. To this question I answer, that Circumcision did cease at the comming of Christ, that notwithstanding the vse thereof was not quite abolished by and by: but it continued free, vntill all men might know that Christ was the end of the Law, by the more manifest reuelation of the light of the Gospel. And here we must note three degrees. The first is, that the ceremonies of the Law were so abolished by the comming of Christ, that they did neither any longer appertain vnto the worship of God, neither were they figures of spiritual things, neither was there any necessitie to vse them. The seconde is, that the vse thereof was free, vntill the truth of the Gospel might more plainly ap-
peare

1.Tim.1.18.

1.Tim.3.7.

Gen.17.13.

peare. The third, that it was not lawful for the faithful to retaine them, saue onely so farre forth as the vse thereof serued, for edification, neither was there any superstition therby fostered. Though that free power to vse them, whereof I haue spoken, be not without exception: because there was a diuerse respect to be had of ceremonies. For circumcision was not in the same place, wherein the sacrifices were, which were ordained for the purging of sins. Wherefore it was lawful for Paul to circuncise Timotheus: it had not bin lawfull for him to offer a sacrifice for sin. This is in deed a general thing that all the worship of the Law, did cease at the comming of Christ, (because it was to continue but for a time) as touching faith and conscience: but concerning the vse wee must knowe this, that it is indifferent and left in the libertie of the godly for a short time: so far as it was not contrary to the confession of faith. We must note the shortnes of time whereof I speak, to wit vntill the plaine manifestation of the Gospel: because some learned men are grossely deceiued in this point, who think that circumcision doeth yet take place among the Iewes: whereas Paul teacheth that it is superfluous when we are buried with Christ by baptisme. It was better and more truly said in the old proverbe, that The synagogue was to be buried with honour. Now it resteth that we declare how farre forth the vse of circumcision was indifferent. That shall easily appeare by the manner of the libertie. Because the calling of the Gentiles was not as yet generally knowen, it was meete that the Iewes should haue some prerogatiue granted them. Therefore vntill it might be better knowen that the adoption was deducted from the lineage & kinred of Abraham vnto all the Gentiles: it was lawfull so far as edification did require, to retaine the signe of difference. For seeing that Paul would not circuncise Titus, and doth auouch that the same was wel done, it followeth that it was not lawful to vse this ceremony alwaies and without choise. Therefore they were to haue respect vnto edification, and vnto the publike commoditie of the Church. Because he could not circuncise Titus, vnlesse he would betraie the doctrine of the Gospel, and lay himselfe open to the slaunders of the aduersaries: he abstained from the free vse of the Ceremonie, which he did vse in Timotheus, when he sawe that it was profitable for the Church. Hereby it doth easily appeare what horrible confusion doth reign in popery. There is there an huge heape of Ceremonies, and to what end, but that they may haue in steede of one veile of the old temple an hundred: God did abrogate those ceremonies which he had commanded, that the truth of the Gospel might shine more clearly: men durst take vpon them to bring in new, and that without keeping any measure. After this came in a wicked surmise, that all these serue for the worship of God: at length followed the diuellish confidence of Merit. Now, forasmuch as it is evidently rough that such Ceremonies are neither veyles nor sepulchres wherewith Christ is couered: but rather stinking dunghils wherein faith and religion are chocked: those who make the vse thereof generally free, doe ascribe more to the Pope, than the Lord graunteth to his Law. It is to no end to speake of the Masse and of such filthinesse which

Coll. 2. 11.

12.

Galat. 2. 3.

containe in themselves manifest idolatrie.

They all knew this. Luke telleth vs that this was Pauls drift, to make an entranche for Timotheus vnto the Iewes, least they should abhorre him as a prophane man. They knew all (saith hee) that his father was a Grecian. Therefore because the mothers had no power ouer their children, they were fully perswaded that he was vncircumcised. Let the readers note here by the way, how miserable the bondage of the people of God was then. Eunicha mother to Timotheus was one of the final remnant, which the very Iewes themselves counted a monster: & yet being married to a man which was an Infidel, she durst not consecrate her children to God: no she durst not so much as giue the external signe of grace: and yet she ceased not therefore to instruct her sonne of a child holly in the feare of God: and in his true worshippe. An example surely worthy to be followed of womē, who their husbands asfray with their tyrannous gouernment, from keeping and training vp their children and families chastly in true godlines. Grecian is taken in this place for a gentile, after the olde and common custome of the scripture.

4 *They deliuered them the decrees to keepe.* In these wordes Luke doeth signifie vnto vs howe desirous Paul was of peace. The best and strongest bond to keepe and foster peace among the churches, was to keepe that which was set downe by the Apostles. When Paul taketh great pains about that, he taketh greate heede least through his fault there arise any trouble. And let vs remember that that continued but for a time: because so soone as he seeth the daunger of offence cease, hee doeth quite vnburthen the churches, and setting apart the decree, he maketh that free which the Apostles had there forbidden. And yet doth not hee cancel or violate by that abrogation that which the Apostles had decreed, or contemne the authors themselves: because they were not determined to establish a perpetuall law: but onely to mitigate for a short time that which might hurt weake consciences: as I did more at large declare in the former chapter: whereby the folly of the papists is sufficiently refuted, who doe grievously lay to our charge that we be farre vnlike Paule: because we wil haue the consciences of the godlie gouerned by the word of God alone, setting light by the decrees of the church, as they call the, and not to be subiect to the wil of men. But as I haue already said, Paul meant nothing lesse, then to insnare mens consciences in the snare of necessitie, for he is not contrary to himself, when he crieth in other places, that all things are cleane to the cleane. And againe, Hee which is cleane eateth all things. And againe, The kingdom of God is not meat and drinke. And againe, Meate doth not commend vs to God. Again, Eat all things which are sold in the shambles, asking no question for conscience sake. But in one word he reconcileth those things which might otherwise seeme to disagree, when he commandeth to abstaine fro things sacrificed to idols, for another mans conscience sake. Neuertheles he taketh great heed that he bind not godly souls with the lawes of men. Therefore we attempt nothing at this day which is contrary to, or disagreeing with Paule. But the papistes mocke vs too grosse, when they compare their

Tit. 1. 15.

Rom. 14. 2.
17.

1. Cor 8. 8.

their lawes with the decrees of the Apostles. The Apostles inuented no new worship of God, they had erected no newespiritual gouernement: but for the desire they had to mainteine peace they exhorted the gentiles, that they wold yeeld a little to the Iewes. Before the pope can excuse his lawes vnder this colour, he must first change them wholly. And as for vs, seeing that the papistes doe place the spiritual worship of God in mans inuentions, and translate the right which belongeth to God alone vnto men, that they may reigne as Lords ouer soules: we are inforced manfully to withstand them, vnlesse through trecherous silence, we wil betray the grace gotten by the blood of Christ. Now what likelihood can there be betweene three decrees set downe for the helpe and comfort of the weake, and an infinite heape of lawes: which doth not onlie oppresse miserable soules with the weight thereof, but also swallowe vp faith? We know the complaint of Augustine writing to Ianuarius: that the Church was wickedly laden euen then with too greate a burden of traditions. Could he, I pray you suffer the bondage of these times, which is almost an hundreth times harder and heauier.

5 *The Churches were confirmed.* By this we gather, that that which Luke setteth down, or rather toucheth concerning the decrees of the apostles, was as it were put in by the way, being not much appertinent vnto the matter. For he commendeth a farre other fruit of Pauls doctrine, when he saith that the churches were confirmed in the faith. Therefore Paule did so order external things, that he was principally careful for the kingdom of God, which consisteth in the doctrine of the gospel, and doth farre surpasse and surmount externall order. Therefore those decrees were mentioned, in as much as they were expedient for mainteining concord, that we might know that the holy man had a care thereof. But religion and godlines hath the former place, whose sole foundation is faith: which againe doth stay it selfe vpon the pure worde of God, and doth not depend vpon mens lawes. Now by this example Luke pricketh vs forward to proceed continually: least at the beginning sloth or neglect of profiting come vpon vs. Also the way to increase faith is expressed, to wit when the Lord doth stirre vs vp by the industry of his seruants: as at that time he vsed the labour and diligence of Paul and his companions. When he addeth immediatly that they were also increased in number: he commendeth another fruit of preaching: and yet he doth therewithal signifie vnto vs, that the more those profite in faith, who are first called, the more doe they bring vnto Christ: as if faith did creepe abroade vnto others by branches.

6 *And when they had gone through Phrygia and the countrie of Galacia, they were forbidden of the holy Ghost to speake the word in Asia.*

7 *And going into Mysia they assaye: to goe into Bithynia: and the spirit suffered them not.*

8 *And when they had passed through Mysia, they came downe to Troada.*

9 *And Paul saw a vision by night, There was a certain man of Macedonia, standing and praying him, and saying, comming into Macedonia, helpe vs.*

10 And so soone as he saw the vision, we sought streightway to goe into Macedonia, being surely confirmed that the Lord had called vs to preach the Gospel to them.

6 When they had gone throughout. Luke sheweth here how diligent & carefull Paul and his companions were in the office of teaching: for hee saith that they iorneyed through diuerse regions of the lesser Asia, that they might preach the gospel. But he reciteth one thing which is worth the remembring, that they were forbidden by the Spirite of God to speake of Christ in some places, which serueth not a little to set forth the Apostleship of Paul: as vndoubtedly he was not a little encouraged to proceed, when hee knewe that the Spirite of God was his guide in his way, and the gouernour of his actions. And whereas whither soeuer they came they prepared themselues to teach, they did that according to their calling, and according to the commaundement of God. For they were sent to preach and publish the Gospell to the Gentiles without exception: but the Lorde reuealed his counsell in gouerning the course of their iorney, which was before vnknowne, euen in a moment. Notwithstanding the question is, If Paul taught no where but whither hee was ledde by the Spirite, what certaintie shall the ministers of the Church haue at this day of their calling, who are certified by no Oracles when they must speake or holde their peace? I answere, Seeing that Pauls prouince and charge was so wide, he had neede of the singular direction of the Spirite. Hee was not made the Apostle of one particular place, or of a fewe Cities: but hee had receiued commaundement to preach the Gospel through Asia, and Europa: which was to saile in a most wide sea. Wherefore there is no cause why wee shoulde woonder that in that confused widenesse God beckened vnto him as it were by reaching forth his hand, how far he would haue him goe, or whither.

But heere ariseth an other harder question, why the Lorde did forbid Paul to speake in Asia, and suffered him not to come into Bithynia. For if aunswere bee made that these Gentiles were vnworthie of the doctrine of saluation; we may againe demaunde why Macedonia was more worthie. Those who desire to bee too wise, doe assigne the causes of this difference in men: that the Lorde vouchsafeth euerie man of his Gospel, as hee seeth him bent vnto the obedience of faith: but hee himselfe saith farre otherwise, to wit, that hee appeared plainly to those which sought him not, and that hee spake to those who asked not of him. For whence cometh aptnesse to be taught and a mind to obey, but from his Spirite? therefore it is certaine that some are not preferred before othersome by their merit, seeing that all men are naturallie like backward and waiwarde from faith. Therefore there is nothing better than to leaue free power to God to vouchsafe and deprive of his grace whom he will. And surely as his eternall election is free, so his calling is also free which floweth thence: and is not grounded in men, seeing that he is not indebted to any.

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Wherefore let vs knowe that the Gospel springeth and issueth out to vs out of the sole fountaine of meere grace. And yet God doeth not want a iust reason, why he offereth his Gospel to some, and passeth ouer other some: But, I say, that that reason lieth hid in his secreat counsell. In the meane season let the faithfull know, that they were called freely, when other were set aside: least they take that to themselves which is due to the mercy of God alone. And in the rest whom God reiecteth for no manifest cause, let them learne to wonder at the deepe depth of his iudgement, which they may not seeke out. And here the word Asia is taken for that part which is properly so called. When Luke saith that Paul and his companions assaied to come into Bithynia, vntil they were forbidden of the spirit: he sheweth that they were not directed by Oracles, saue onely when neede required, as the Lorde vseth to be present with his in dolefull and vncertaine matters.

9 *A vision by night.* The Lorde would not that Paul should stay any longer in Asia: because he would draw him into Macedonia. And Luke expresseth the maner of the drawing, that a man of Macedonia appeared to him by night. Where we must note that the Lord did not alwayes obserue the same manner of reuelation: because diuerse kinds are more conuenient for confirmation. And it is not said that this vision was offered in a dreame: but onely in the night season. For there be certaine night visions, which men see when they be awake.

Helpe vs. This speech setteth forth the ministerie committed to Paul. For seeing that the Gospel is the power of God to saluation, those which are the ministers of God are said to helpe those who perish: that hauing deliuered them from death, they may bring them vnto the inheritance of eternall life. And this ought to be no small incouragement for godly teachers to stirre vp the heat of their studie and desire: when they heare that they call backe miserable soules from destruction; and that they helpe those who should otherwise perish, that they may bee saued. Again, all people vnto whom the Gospel is brought, are taught reuerently to embrace the ministers thereof as deliuerers: vnlesse they will maliciously reiect the grace of God: and yet this commendation and title is not so translated vnto men, that God is robbed euen of the least parte of his praise: because though hee by his ministers giue saluation, yet is he the onely author thereof, as if he reached out his hands to helpe.

Rom. 1.16;

10 *Being fullie perswaded.* Hence we gather that it was no bare vision but that it was also confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit. For Satan doeth oftentimes abuse ghosts and visurs to deceiue with all, that hee may mocke and cosin the vnbeleeuers. Whereby it cometh to passe that the bare vision leaueth mans minde in doubt: but such as are diuine in deede, those doeth the Spirit seale by a certaine marke: that those may not doubt nor wauer, whom the Lord will haue certainly addicted to himselfe. A wicked Spirit appeared to Brutus, inuiting him to enter that unhappie cumbate and battle which he had at Philippi, euen in the verie same place whereunto Paul was afterward called. But as

the cause was farre vnlike: so the Lorde dealt farre otherwise with his seruant, so that he put him out of doubt: and left him not astonied with feare. Nowe in Paul and his companions the desire to obey infused immediately vpon the certaintie: for so soone as they vnderstand that the Lord called them, they addresse themselues to their iorney. The termination of the participle which is here vsed is actiue: and though it haue diuerse significations, I do not doubt but that Luke his meaning is, that Paul and the rest, after that they had conferred this vision with the former Oracles, were fully perswaded that the Lord had called them into Macedonia.

11 Therefore when we had loosed from Troas, we came with a streight course into Samothracia, and the day following to Neapolis.

12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chiefe Citie of the parties of Macedonia, beeing a free Citie. And wee stayed in the same Citie certaine dayes.

13 And on the day of the Sabaoths wee went out of the Citie besides a ryuer, where was wont to be prayer, and sitting, we spake to the woman which came together.

14 And a certaine woman named Lydia, a seller of purples, of the Citie of the Thyatirians, which worshipped God, heard: whose heart the Lord opened, that she might take heed to those things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when shee was baptized and her house, shee besought vs, saying, If yee iudge me faithfull to the Lorde, enter into my house and tarry. And shee enforced vs.

11 This hystorie doeth as it were in a glasse shewe, howe sharply the Lord did exercise the faith & pacience of his, by bringing them in great straites, which they could not haue ouercome vnlesse they had ben indued with singular constancie. For the entrance of Paul into Macedonia is reported to be such, as that it might haue caused him to giue but small credence to the vision. These holy men leauing the worke which they had in hand, did crosse the seas with great hast, as if the whole nation of the Macedonians would haue come to meete them with earnest desire to be holpen. Now the successe is so farre from being answerable to their hope, that their mouthes are almost quite stopped. When they enter the chiefe Citie, they finde none there with whom they may take any paine, therefore they are enforced to go into the field that they may speak in an obscure corner and wildernes. Yea euen there they cannot haue one man which will harken to their doctrine, they can onely haue one woman to be a disciple of Christ: and that one which was an aliant. Who would not haue saide that this iorney was taken in hand foolishly, which fel out so vnhappy? But the Lorde doeth thus bring to passe his works vnder a base & weak kind: that his power may shine more clearly at length, and it was most meet that the beginnings of the kingdome of Christ should be so ordered, that they might tast of the humilitie of the crosse. But we must mark the constancy of Paul & his companions, who
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being not dismayed with such vnprosperous beginnings, trie whether any occasion will offer it selfe contrary to their expectation. And assuredly the seruants of Christ must wastle with all lets, neither must they be discouraged, but go forward to morrow, if this day there appeare no fruite of their labour, for there is no cause why they should desire to be more happie than Paul. When Luke saith that they abode in that Citie, some had rather haue it, that they conferred or disputed, but the other translation is more plaine, & the text perswadeth vs to make choise thereof; because Lukē wil shortly after declare, that Lydia was the first fruites of that Church, and we may easily gesse, that the Apostles went out of the Citie, because there was no gate opened to them in it.

13 *In the day of the Sabaoths.* No doubt the Iewes sought some place which was solitarie and by the way, when they were disposed to pray, because their religion was then euery where most odious. And God by their example meant to teach vs, what great account we ought to make of the profession of faith: that wee doe not forsake it either for feare of enuie or of daunger. They had in deede in many places Synagogues; but it was not lawfull for them to assemble themselves publicly at Philippi which was a free Citie of Rome. Therefore they withdraw themselves into a secreat corner, that they may pray to god where they could not be espied: and yet there were those who did grudge euen at this, so that they might think that it might both cause trouble and danger, but they prefer the worship of God before their own quietnes & commoditie. Furthermōre we may gather by this worde Sabaoth, that Luke speaketh of the Iewes. Secondly forasmuch as he commendeth the godlines of Lydia, it must needs be that she was a Iewesse; which matter needeth no long disputation, forasmuch as we know that it was an hainous offence for the grecians & Romās to celebrate the Sabaoth, or to take vp Iewish rites. Now we vnderstand that the Iewes made choise of the riuers bank that they might there pray, not for any superstitions sake, but because they shunned the company of men, & the sight of the people. If any man object, why did not euery man pray in his house priuately. The answer is ready, that This was a solemn rite of praying to testifie godlines: & that being far from the superstitions of the Gentiles, they might one exhort another to worship God alone, & that they might nourish the religion receiued of the fathers among themselves. As touching Paul & his fellowes who were lately come, it is to be thought that they came thither not only to pray, but also because they hoped to do some good. For it was a fit place for them to teach in, being far from noise: & it was meet that they should be more attentiuē, to heare the word who came thither to pray. Luke putteth the day of the sabaoths, in steed of the sabaoth: where following Erasmus I haue translated it, There was wont to be praier: the old interpreter hath, did seeme. And the word *nomizesthai* hath both significations among the Grecians. Yet this sense is more fit for this present place, that they did commonly vse to haue prayer there.

We spake to the women. Either that place was appointed for the assemblies of women: or else religion was cold among men, so that they came

more slowly. Howsoever it be, we see that the holy men omit no occasion or opportunitie: because they vouchsafe to offer the Gospel euen to women alone. Furthermore forasmuch as it seemeth likely to me, that men and women made their prayers there together, I suppose that Luke omitted the men, either because they would not heare, or else because they profited nothing by hearing.

14 *A woman named Lydia.* If they had bin heard of a few women, yet this had beene but to enter in as it were by a strait chinke. But now whereas one only heareth attentiuely and with fruit, might it not haue seemed that the way was stopt before Christ? But afterwarde there sprunge a noble Church of that one small grasse, which Paul setteth out with many excellent commendations: yet it may be that Lydia had some companions, whereof there is no mention made, because shee did farre excell them all. And Luke doth not assigne that for the cause why this one woman did shew her selfe apt to bee taught, because shee was more wittie than the rest, or because she had some preparation of her selfe: but he saith that the Lorde opened her heart that she might giue care and take heede to the speech of Paul. He had of late commended her godlinesse: and yet he sheweth that she could not comprehend the doctrine of the Gospel, saue onely through the illumination of the Spirit. Wherefore we see that not faith alone, but all vnderstanding and knowledge of spirituall thinges is the peculiar gift of God, and that the ministers do no good by teaching and speaking, vnlesse the inward calling of God be thereunto added. By the word heart, the Scripture meaneth sometimes the minde, as when Moses saith, God hath not giuen thee hitherto a heart to vnderstand. So likewise in this place Luke doth not onely signifie vnto vs that Lydia was brought by the inspiration of the Spirit, with affection of heart to embrace the Gospel: but that her minde was lightned, that she might vnderstand it. By this let vs learne that such is the blockishnesse, such is the blindness of men; that in seeing they see not, in hearing they heare not, vntill such time as God doth giue them new eyes and new eares. But we must note the speech, that The heart of Lydia was opened, that shee might giue care to the externall voice of the teacher. For as preaching alone is nothing else but the deade letter: so wee must beware least a false imagination, or a shew of secret illumination leade vs away from the worde, whereupon faith dependeth, and wherein it resteth. For many, to the end they may amplifie the grace of the Spirit, feigne to themselues certaine inspired persons, that they may leaue no vse of the external word. But the scripture doeth not suffer any such diuorce to bee made, which ioyneth the ministerie of men with the secret inspiration of the Spirit. Vnlesse the minde of Lydia had beene opened, Pauls preaching should haue beene onely literal: and yet the Lord doth not inspire her with bare reuelations onely, but he giueth her the reuerence of his word: so that the voice of man, which might otherwise haue bin vttered in vaine, doeth pearce into a minde indued with heauenly light. Therefore let those brainicke fellows be packing, who vnder color of the spirit, refuse external doctrine.

For wee must note the temperature or moderation which Luke setteth downe here; that we can haue or obtaine nothing by the hearing of the worde alone without the grace of the Spirit and that the spirit is giuen vs, not that he may bring contempt of the word, but rather that he may dip into our mindes, and write in our heartes the faith thereof.

Now if the cause bee demanded why the Lord opened one womans heart alone, we must returne vnto that principle, that so many belecue as are ordained to life. For the fear of God which went before the plain and manifest knowledge of Christ in Lydia, was also a fruite of free election. The describers of situations of places, say that *Thyatira* is a citie of Lydia, situate vpon the side of the riuer called Hermus, and that it was sometimes called Pelopia, but some there be who attribute it to Phrygia, some to Mysia.

15 *When shee was baptized.* Heereby it appeareth how effectually God wrought in Lydia euen in a short moment. For it is not to be doubted but that she receiued and embraced the faith of Christe sincerely, and gaue him her name, before Paul would admitte her vnto baptisme, this was a token of meere readinesse: also her holy zeale and godlines doe therein shew themselves, in that she doth also consecrate her family to God. And surely all the godly ought to haue this desire, to haue those who are vnder them to be partakers of the same faith. For he is vnworthie to be numbred among the children of God, and to be a ruler ouer others, whosoever is desirous to reigne and rule in his owne house ouer his wife, children, seruants, and maids, and will cause them to giue no place to Christ. Therefore let euery one of the faithfull studie to gouern and order his house so, that it may be an image of the church. I graunt that Lydia had not in her hand the hearts of all those which wer of her household, that she might turne vnto Christ whomsoever she would: but the Lord did blesse her godly desire, so, that she had all her household obedient. The godly (as we haue already said) must indeuour with might and main to drue from their houses all maner superstition. Secondlye, that they haue not profane families: but that they keep them vnder the feare of the Lord. So Abraham the father of the faithfull, was commanded to circuncise al his seruants with him: and he is commended for the care he had to gouern his house, and to instruct his family. Furthermore if this dutie be required at the hands of the housholder, much more of a prince, that he suffer not so much as in him lyeth, the name of God to be profaned in his realme.

She besought them saying. This hath the force of an admiration, when she saith, if ye haue iudged me faithfull: as if she should say, I beseech you by that faith which you haue approued by baptisme, that yee refuse not to lodge with me. And Lydia did by such an earnest desire, testifie, howe entirely she loued the Gospel. Neuerthelesse it is not to be doubted, but that the Lorde gaue her such an affection, to the end Paul might be the more encouraged to proceed: not only because hee saw that hee was liberally and courteously entertained, but also because he might thereby iudge of the fruite of his doctrine. Therefore this was not the womans inuiting

ting only, but also Gods, to keep Paul and his company there, to which end that tendeth also, that Lydia enforced them: as if God did lay hand vpon them and stay them in the womans person.

16 And it happened as we went to prayer, a certaine maid hauing a spirit of diuination did meet vs, which brought her masters much gaine by diuining.

17 She followed Paul and vs, and cryed, saying: These men are the seruants of the most high God, which preach to vs the way of saluation.

18 And this shee did many daies, And Paul taking it greenously, and turning back said to the spirit: I command thee in the name of the Lord Iesus Christ, that thou come out of her. And he came out the same houre.

19 And when her masters saw, that the hope of their gaine was gon, hauing taken Paul and Silas, they drew them into the market place to the rulers.

20 And when they had presented them to the Magistrates they said, These men trouble our citie seeing they be Iewes:

21 And they preach ordinances, which we may not receiue, nor keep, seeing we are Romanes.

22 And the multitude came together against them: and when the Magistrates had rent their garments, they commanded them to be beaten with rods.

16 Luke profecureth the increase of the church: for though he do not straightway in a word expresse that thing, yet is it easily gathered out of the text, that many wer brought vnto the faith, or at least that the church was somewhat augmented, and Paul did not frequent the assemblies in time of praier in vain. Notwithstanding Luke doth also report that Satan did interrupt this course: to wit, because after that the Apostles wer beaten with rods & cast in prison, they were at length enforced to depart the citie: yet we shall see in the end of this chapter, that when Satan had done his worst, ther was some body of the church gathered before they did depart.

¶ *Having a spirit of " diuination.* The Poets do feign that the serpent called Python was slain with the darts of Phœbus, Hereupon rose another inuention, that they said, that those who wer possessed, wer inspired with the spirit of Python, and peraduenture they wer ther vpon called Phœbades in honor of Apollo. But Luke followeth the common custome of speaking: because he sheweth the error of the common people, and not through what inspiration the maid did prophesie. For it is certaine that the diuell did deceiue men vnder the viture of Apollo, as all idolatric & subtiltie was inuented & forged in his shop. But some man may maruell that the diuell (through whose motion & persuation the maide did crye) was the authour of such an honorable commendation, wherewith she adorned Paul & Silas, & the rest. For seeing that he is the father of lying, how could the truth proceed from him? Secondly, how is it that he gaue place willingly to the seruants of Christ, by whom his kingdom was destroyed? how can this hang together that he prepared the minds of the people to hear the gospel, whose mortal enemy he is? Assuredly there is nothing more proper to him then to turn away the minds of the people from

“ Or of Python,

from the word of god, which he doth now wil & wish the to hear: whence cometh such a sodain change, or ynwonted motion? But the diuell is the father of lying in such sort, that he couereth himself vnder the false & decciueable colour of truth. There hee plaied another person through his crafty subtilty, thā was agreable to his nature, that by creeping in craftilie he might do the more hurt: & therefore whereas he is called the father of lyes, we must not so take it, as if he did alwaies lie manifestly & without any colour. Yea rather wee must beware of his craftie subtiltie, least when he pretēdeth the colour of truth, he deceiue vs vnder a vain shew. We see also how he vseth like subtiltie daily. For what can bear a sayrer shew then the Pope his titles, wherein he doth not boast himself to be the aduersarie of Christ, but his vicar? What can be more plausible than that solemne preface, In the name of the Lord, Amen? Notwithstanding we know that whiles the hypocriticall ministers of Satan doe thus pretend the truth, they corrupt it & with a deadly corruption infect it. Seing that Satan hath a double way to resist the gospeltō wit, bicause he doth sometimes rage openly, & sometimes hee creepeth in craftily vnder lyes, hee hath also two kindes of lying and deceiuing: either when he ouertlioweth the worde of God with false doctrines & grosse superstitions, or els when he doth craftily feigne that he is a friend of the word, and so doth insinuate himself subtilly, yea he doth neuer hurt more deadly, thā whē he transfourmeth himselfe into an angell of light. Now wee perceiue to what end that so gorgeous a titile did tend, wherewith he did extoll Paul and his companions: namelic, because it was not so conuenient for him, to make open warre against the gospel, he went about to ouerthrow the credite thereof by secrete shifts. For if Paul had admitted that testimonie, there should haue been no longer any difference between the wholesome doctrine of Christ, and the mockes of Satan. The light and brightnesse of the gospel should haue been intangled in the darknesse of lying, and so quite put out.

But the question is why God doth graunt Satan so great libertie, as to suffer him to deceiue miserable men, and to bewitch them with true diuinations: For omitting the disputations which some men moue concerning his foresight, I take this for a plaine case, that he doth prophesie and foretell things to come, and which are hidden onely through Gods sufferance. But God seemeth by this meanes to lay open men who are retchles or carelesse, to his subtiltie, so that they cannot beware. For seeing that prophesies breath out diuine power, mens minds must needs be touched with reuerence so often as they come abroad, vnlesse they contemne God. I answer, that Satan hath neuer so much libertie graunted him of god, saue only that the ynthankful world may be punished: which is so desirous of a lie, that it had rather be deceiued, then obey the truth. For that is a general leuill, whereof Paul complaineth in the first chap. Rom. 1. 21, to the Romanes, That men doe not glorifie God being knowen naturally by the creation of the world, & that they suppress his truth vnjustly.

It is a iust rewarde for so great ynthankfulnesse, that Satan hath the bridle

bridle giuen him; that through diuers iuglings hee may worke the ruine of those who turne away maliciously from the light of God. Therefore so often as you read the diuinations of Satan, think vpon the iust iudgement of God.

Nowe if God so sharply punish the contempt of his light in the profane gentiles, who haue no other teachers but the heauen & earth, how much more sharp punishment do those deserue who wittingly & willingly choke the pure doctrine of saluation, reuealed to them in the law and the gospel? No maruell therefore if Satā haue long bewitched the world so freely with his subtiltie, sithence that the truth of the Gospell hath been wickedly contemned, which was made most manifest. But it is objected again that no man is free from danger, when false diuinations flie to and fro so fast. For euen as well the good as the euill seeme to bee subiect to the cosonage of Satan, when the truth is darkened and ouercast. The answer is readie, though Satan set snares for all men in generally, yet are the godly deliuered by the grace of God, least they be caught together with the wicked. Ther is also a more manifest distinctiō set down in the scripture, because the Lorde doth by this meanes trie the faith & godlines of his: and doth make blinde the reprobate, that they may perish, as they be worthie. Therefore Paul saith plainly, that Satan hath not leaue graunted him to lead any into error saue those who wil not obey God, and imbrace the truth. Whereby is also reprovēd their wicked vngodlinesse, who vnder this colour excuse the profane contempt of all doctrine: whither shall we turne our selues (say they) seeing that Satan is so expert to deceiue? Therefore it is better for vs to liue without any religion at all, then through the desire of religion to run headlong into destruction. Neither do they object and pretend this feare for their excuse in earnest, but seing they desire nothing more then to wander carelessly like beastes without any feare of god: they can be content with any excuse, so they be not tyed to any religion. I confesse indeed that Satan doth no lesse craftily then wickedly abuse the sacred name of God, and that that prouerb is too true, which papistrie hath brought forth, that, In the name of the Lord beginneth all euill: but seeing that the Lorde doth pronounce that he wil be the teacher of the humble, and hath promised that he wil be nigh to those which are right in heart: seeing that Paul teacheth that the worde of God is the sword of the Spirite: seeing that he doth testifie that those who are wel grounded in the faith of the gospel, are not in danger to be seduced by men: seeing that Peter calleth the scripture a light shining in a darke place: seeing that courteous exhortatiō or inuiring of Christ can neuer deceiue vs; Seek & ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you; let Satan do what he can, and let the false prophetes seeke to darken the truth so much as they are able, wee need not be afraide least the spirit of wisdom and discretion forsake vs, who ruleth Satan at his pleasure, and maketh vs triumph ouer him by the faith of his worde.

18 Paul tooke it greediously. It may be that at the first Paul neglected and did not greatly regard the crying of the maide, because hee hoped that

that there would be no account made thereof, and had rather that it should vanish away of it self. But the continuall repetition doth at length make him wearie: because if he had any longer dissembled, Satan would haue waxt more & more insolent through his silence and patience. Secondly, he ought not to haue broken out into this prohibition rashly, vntill he knew for a certaintie that hee was furnished with the power of God. For Paul his commandement had bin foolish & vain, without the commandement of God. And this must be noted, least any man condemn Paul of too great hastines, because he incountred so valiantly with the vncleane spirite. For hee did not conceiue any griefe or indignation saue only because he saw that the subtiltie of Satan would increase, vnlesse he did betimes preuent it: neither did he attempt any thing without the motion of the spirit: neither did he enter the conflict vntill hee was armed with power from heauen. Notwithstanding he seemeth to be contrary to himselfe, seeing that he saith elswhere that he reioyceth vpon what occasion soeuer he see the gospel preached, euen by wicked men, and such as did studie of set purpose to bring him in contempt. I answered that he had another more apter reason for himself in this place: because all men would haue thought that the Spirit of the maide had plaid with Paul: so that by that meanes the doctrine of the gospel should not only haue come in suspicion, but should also haue come into great contempt. To this end was it that Christe also did commaund the diuell to holde his peace, whereas notwithstanding he suffered his name to be extolled by vnnicet and vnworthie men.

Phil. 1. 18.

Mark. 1. 25.

Luke. 4. 35.

I commaund thee. We must note the forme of speech. For as the myracle was about to haue a double vse: namely, that the power of Christ might be knowne: secondly that he might declare that he had no fellowship with Satans iuglings: so Paul in giuing the authoritie and power to Christe alone, doeth declare that he is only a minister, that done hee doth openly set Christ against the diuell, to the end that by the conflict all men may see that they be deadly enemies. For it was profitable that many should be awaked, who had bin giuen to such grosse seducing, that being well purged they might come to the true faith.

19 *But when her masters.* The same diuell who of late did flatter Paul by the mouth of the maide, doth now driue her masters into furie, that they may put him to death: so that hauing chaged his coat he doth now play a tragicomic: who could not speed wel before by his faire speech and flatterie. And though the heat of zeale wherewith Paul was prouoked to anger did raise the whirlewinde of persecution, yet is hee not therefore to be blamed: neither did it any whit repent Paul that he had wrought the myracle, so that hee did wish that that were vndone which was done, because he knew full wel through what motion he had driuen the diuell out of the maide: whereby we are taught that we must not rashlie condemne things which are well done, and that which is taken in hand at the commandement of God, though an vnhappy successie follow: because God doth then examine the constancie of those which bee his, vntill a more ioyfull and prosperous ende driue away all sorrowe.

As

As touching the men, Luke expresseth the cause why they were so mad vpon Paul: to wit, because their hope of filthie gain was gone. But though they were pricked forward with couetousnes only to persecute the Gospel and the ministers thereof: yet they pretend a fair colour, that it grieueth them that the publike state should be peruered, that their ancient lawes should bee broken, and peace troubled. So though the enemies of Christ behaue themselves wickedly and vnonestly, yet they alwayes inuent some cause for their sinne. Yea though their wicked desire appear plainly, yet with an impudent face they alwaies bring in somewhat to couer their filthinesse withall. So at this day those Papists which are more zealous ouer their lawe, haue nothing els in their mindes besides their gain and gouernment. Let them sweare and forswear by al their Saints and sacrifices that they are inforced only with a godly affection: yet the matter it selfe doth plainly shew, that it is the coldnes of their kitchins which maketh their zeale so whor, and that ambition is the fanne thereof. For they be either hungrie dogs pricked forward with greedinesse: or furious Lions breathing out nothing but crueltie.

20 *These men trouble our citie.* This accusation was craftily composed, to burde the seruants of Christ. For on the one side they pretend the name of the Romans, then which nothing was more fauourable: on the other, they purchase hatred and bring them in contempt by naming the Iewes, which name was at that time infamous: for as touching religion the Romans wer more like to any, then to the Iewish nation. For it was lawful for a man which was a Romane to do sacrifice either in Asia or in Grecia, or in any other countrie wher were Idols & superstitions, I warrant you Satan did agree with himself very well, though he put on diuers shapcs, but that which was religion only, then which ther was no other in the world, was counted among the Romanes detestable. They frame a third accusation out of the crime of sedition: for they pretende that the publike peace is troubled by Paul & his companie. In like sort was Christ brought in contempt, & euen at this day the paists haue no more plausible thing wherwith they may bring vs to be hated, thā when they crie that our doctrine tenderth to no other ende but to procure tumults, that at length there may follow a filthie confusion of all things. But we must valiantly contemn this filthie & false infamie as did Christ and Paul, vntill the Lord bring to light the malice of our enemies, and refute their impudencie.

Luk. 23. 5.

21 *Ordinances which.* They lean to a prejudice, least the cause shuld come to be disputed: as the papists deale with vs at this day, this was decreed in a general counsell: it is a more ancient & comon opinion, thā that it may be called in questiō: custom hath long time approued this: this hath been established by consent more then a thousand yeeres agoe. But to what end tend all these things saue only that they may rob the word of god of all authoritie. They make boast of mans decrees, but in the mean season they leaue no place at all for the lawes of God. Wee may see by this place what force these prejudices ought to haue. The lawes of the Romanes wer excellent, but religion doth depende vpon the worde of God alone. Therefore in this matter we must take great heed, that men being

being brought vnder, the authoritie of God alone do preuaile, and that he make all things which in the world are excellent, subiect to him.

21 *The multitude came together.* When Luke declarerh that there was great concourse of the people made, after that a few men of no reputation, to wit, such as did iuggle and cosin to get gaine, and whose sutchines was wel knownen, had made some sturre: he teacheth with what fury the world rageth against Christ. Follshines and inconstancie are in deed common vices among al people, and almost continual, but the wonderful force of Satan doth therein bewray it self, in that those who are in other matters modest & quiet, are for a matter of no importāce in a heat, & become companions of most vile persons; when the truth must be resisted. There was neuer a whit more modestie to be found in the iudges themselves: if we consider what was their duty. For they ought by their grauity to haue appeased the fury of the people, & to haue set themselves stoutly against their violence, they ought to haue aided & defended the guiltles: but they lay hands on the outrageously, & renting their garments, they cōmand them to be stripped naked & whipt, before they know the matter. Surely the malice of men is to be lamented: whereby it came to passe, that almost all the iudgement seates of the world which ought to haue bin sanctuaries of iustice, haue bin polluted with the wicked & sacrilegious oppugning of the gospel. Notwithstanding the question is, why they were cast in prison, seing they were already punished: for the prison was ordained for the keeping of men? They vsed this kind of correction, vntil they might know more: and so we see the seruants of Christ more sharply handled, than adulterers, robbers, and other most vile persons. Whereby appeareth more plainely that force of Satan in stirring vp the minds of men, that they obserue no shew of iudgment in persecuting the gospel. But though the godly be more hardly handled for defending the truth of Christ, than are the wicked for their wickednes: yet it goeth well with the godly, because they triumph gloriously before god & his angels in all iniuries which they suffer. They suffer reproch and slander: but because they know that the marks of Christ are in greater price & more esteemed in heauen, than the vaine pompes of the earth, the more wickedly and reprochfully the world doth vex them, the greater cause haue they to reioyce. For if prophane writers did so honor Themistocles, that they preferred his prison before the seat & court of iudges: how much more honorably must we think of the son of god, whose cause is in hand, so oftē as the faithful suffer persecution for the gospel? Therefore though the Lord suffered Paul & Silas to be scourged & imprisoned by the wicked iudges: yet he did not suffer them to be put to any shame, but that which turned to their greater renown. For seing that those persecutions which we must suffer for the testimony of the Gospel, are remnants of the sufferings of Christ: like as our Prince turned the crosse which was accursed into a triumphant charget, so he shal in like sort adorn the prisons & gibbets of his, that they may there triumph ouer Satan and all the wicked.

Renting their garments. Because the old interpreter had truly translated this, it was cūld done of Etasimus to change it, that The Magistrates

did rent their owne garments. For this was Luke his meaning only, that the holy men were outragiously beaten, the lawfull order of iudgement being neglected, and that they laid hands on them with such violence that their garments were rent. And this had been too far disagreeing with the custome of the Romanes, for the iudges to cut their owne garments publikely in the market place: especially seeing the question was concerning an vnknowne religion, for which they did not greatly care; but I will not long stand about a plaine matter.

23 And when they had giuen them many stripes, they did cast them into prison, commanding the keeper of the prison to keepe them safe.

24 Who seeing he had receiued such commandement, did put them in the inner prison, and made fast their feet in the stocks.

25 And at midnight Paul & Silas praying did praise god. And those which lay bound heard them.

26 And sodainly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison wer shaken. And by and by all the dores were opened, and all their hands were loosed.

27 And when the keeper of the prison awaked, and saw al the prison dores open, drawing out his sworde he was about to slea himself: thinking that those which lay bounde were fled.

28 And Paul cryed with a loud voice, saying: do thy selfe no harm: for we be al heere.

23 That he should keep them safe. Whereas the Magistrates command that Paul and Silas should be kept so diligently, it was done to this end, that they might know more of the matter. For they had already beaten them with rods to appease the tumult. And this is that which I saide of late, that the worlde doth rage with such blinde furie against the ministers of the gospel, that it doth keepe no meane in feueritic. But as it is very profitable for vs for examples sake, to know howe vncourtously and vncomlie the witnesses of Christe were entertained in times past: so it is no lesse profitable to know that which Luke addeth immediatlie concerning their fortitude, and patience. For euen when they lay bound with fetters, he saith that in praier they lauded god, wherby it appereth that neither the reproch which they suffred, nor the stripes which made their flesh smart: nor the stinke of the deep dungeon, nor the danger of death, which was hard at hand, could hinder them from giuing thanks to the Lord ioyfully and with glad hearts. Wee must note this generall rule, that we cannot pray as we ought, but we must also praise God. For though the desire to pray, arise of the feeling of our want and miseries, and therefore it is for the most part ioyned with sorrow and carefulnesse: yet the faithfull must so bridle their affections, that they mumur not against God: so that the right forme of prayer doth ioync two affections together, to look too contrary: carefulnesse, and sorrow, by reason of the present necessitie which doth keepe vs downe, and ioyfulnesse, by reason of the obedience wherby we submit our selues to God, and by reason

of the hope which shewing vs the hauen nigh at hand doth refresh vs euen in the midst of shipwracke. Such a forme doth Paul prescribe to vs. Let your prayers (saith he) be made knownen to God with thanksgiuing. But in this historie we must note the circumstances. For though the pain of the stripes wer greuous, though the prison were troublesome, though the daunger were great: seeing that Paule and Silas cease not to praise GOD, wee gather by this howe greatly they were encouraged to beare the crosse. So Luke reported before that the Apostles reioyced because they were counted worthie to suffer reproche for the name of the Lord.

Phil. 4. 6.

Chap. 5. 41.

And those which lay bound. Wee must know that Paul & Silas prayed aloud, that they might make the boldnesse of a good conscience knowne to others, who wer shut vp in the same prison: for they might haue made their praier with secret groning and sighing of heart as they were wont, or they might haue prayed vnto the Lorde quietly and softly. Why doe they then exalt their voice? Assuredly they do not that for any ambition: but that they may professe, that trusting to the goodnesse of their cause they flie without fear vnto God. Therefore in their praiers was included a confession of faith, which did appertaine vnto a common exāple, and prepared as wel the malefactors as the Iailers house to consider the myracle.

26 *There was an earthquake.* The Lord in shewing this visible sign, ment chiefly to provide for his seruants, that they might more manifestly know that their praiers wer heard: yet he had respect also of the rest. He could haue loosed the fetters of Paul & Silas without an earthquake, & also haue opened the gates. But that addition serued not a little to confirme them, seeing that the Lord for their sakes did shake both the aire & also the earth: againe it was requisite that the keeper of the prison & the rest should feeble the presence of God, least they should thinke that the myracle came by chaunce. Neither is it to bee doubted but that the Lord did then shew a token of his power, which should be profitable for all ages, so that the faithfull may fully assure themselves that hee will be nigh vnto them, so often as they are to enter cumbats & dangers for the defence of the Gospel. Neuerthelesse he doth neither alwayes keep the same course, to refuse his pretence by manifest signes, neither is it lawful for vs to prescribe him a lawe. For hee did helpe his by manifest myracles then, for this cause, that we may bee content with his hidden grace at this day: concerning which matter we haue spoken more vpon the second chapter.

27 *when the keeper of the prison was awaked.* He would haue slaine himself, that he might preuent punishment. For it had been a foolish answer to haue said that the dores were opened of their owne accord. But this question may be asked. Seeing that Paul seeth that they might haue some hope to escape if he should slea himself, why doth he hinder him: for he seemeth by this means to refuse the deliuerance which was offred by god: yea it seemeth to haue bin a meer toy, in that the Lord would haue the Iailer awaked, least there should be any vse of the myracle. I answer, that

we must in this place haue respect vnto his counsell & purpose. For he did not loose Paul & Silas, and the rest from their fetters, neither did hee therefore open the doores, that he might streight way let them goe free: but that by shewing the power of his hand, he might scale vp the faith of Paul and Silas: and might make the name of Christe glorious among others. Therefore he doth so yeeld to the petitions of Paul and Silas, that he sheweth that he is able enough to deliuer them so often as hee shall thinke it good: and that nothing can hinder him, but that he is able to enter not only into prisons: but also into graues, that he may deliuer those that be his. He opened the gates of the prison to Peter to another ende as we saw chap. 12. But now forasmuch as he had another way in readinesse to deliuer Paul & Silas, he meant not so much to deliuer them for the present time by miracle, as to confirm the against the time to come. Again, we must call that to mind which I said of late, that the opening of the prison appertained vnto others, that it might bee knowen to many witnesses, that God did fauour the doctrine, which was now burthened with an vniust prejudice. Vndoubtedly Paul perceiued this: and therefore though his bands wer loosed, he did not once wag fro his place. He might haue gone away if he had been so disposed: why doth hee not? Was it because he contemned the grace of God? or because through his slouthfulness he wil make the miracle frustrate? None of all these is probable: whence we gather that he was holden by God: as the Lord vseth to direct the minds of those which be his in doubtfull matters, that they may follow sometimes ignorantly, sometimes wittingly, that which is expedient to be done, and not passe the ir bounds.

29 And calling for a light he sprang in, and trembling he fell downe at the feet of Paul and Silas.

30 And when he had brought them forth he saith, Sirs, what must I doe to bee saued?

31 And they said, beleene in the Lord Iesus Christ, and thou shalt be saued & thy household.

32 And they spake to him the word, and to all that were in his house,

33 And taking them at the same houre of the night he washed their stripes: & was himself baptized and all his household forthwith.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them: & he reioyced that he and all his whole house beleeued in God.

29 Being astonied he fell down. This keeper was no lesse brought vnder with feare to shewe obedience to god, then with the miracle prepared. Heerby it appeareth what a good thing it is for men to be thrown down fro their pride, that they may learn to submit themselues to god. He was hardned in his superstitions: therefore he might with a lostie stomacke haue despiced whatsoeuer Paul and Silas should haue saide, whom hee had also reprochfully thrust into the inermost part of the prison. Now feare maketh him apt to be taught and gentle. Therefore so often as the Lord shall strike vs, or cast vs downe: let vs knowe that this is done that we may be brought in order from our too much haughtinesse.

But

But it is a wonder that he was not reproued for falling downe at their feet. For why did Paul winke at that, which (as Luke recordeth) Peter would not suffer in Cornelius? I aunswere that Paul doeth therefore beare with the keeper: because he knoweth that he was not moued with superstition but with feare of Gods iudgement so to humble himselfe. It was a kind of worship common inough: but chiefly among the Romans it was a solemn thing, when they wold humbly craue any thing, or craue pardon, they fel down at their knees, to whō they put vp their supplicatiō. Therefore there was no cause why Paul should be displeased with a man whom he saw simply hūbled of God. For if there had bin any thing committed contrary to the glory of God, he had not forgotten that zeal which he shewed before among the men of Licaonia. Therefore by his silence we gather that in this kind of worship there was nothing cōtrary to godlines or the glory of God.

Cha. 10. 16.

30 *Sirs what must I doe.* He doth so aske counsel that he sheweth there withal that he wilbe obedient. By this we see that he was throughly touched, so that he was readie to doe what they should command him, whō not manie howres before he had bound vncurtiously. The wicked oftentimes when they see wonders, thogh they tremble for a time, yet are they streightway made more obstinate, as it befel Pharaο: at least they are not so tamed, that they giue ouer theselues to God. But in this place the keeper (acknowledging the power of God) was not only a litle afraid, so that he returned streightway vnto his former crueltie: but he sheweth himself obedient to God, and desirous of sound and wholesom doctrine. He demandeth how he may obtain saluation: wherby it appeareth more plainly, that he was not sodainly taken with some light feare of God only: but truly humbled to offer himself to be a scholer to his ministers. He knew that they were cast in prison for no other cause, saue only because they did ouerthrow the common estate of religion. Now he is ready to heare their doctrine, which he had before contemned.

Ex. 8. 8. 33

31 *Beleeue in the Lord Iesus.* This is but a short and to looke to, a colde & hungrie definition of saluatiō, & yet is it perfect, to belecue in Christ. For Christ alone hath all the parts of blessednes & eternal life included in him, which he offreth to vs by the gospel: & by faith we receiue the as I haue declared. Ch. 15. And here we must note 2. things, first that Christ is the mark wherat faith must ayme: & therefore mens minds do nothing els but wander, when they turn aside frō him. Therefore no merue if all the diuinity of popery be nothing els but an huge lump and horrible labyrinth: because neglecting Christ they flatter themselues in vaine and friuolous speculatiōs. Secondly, we must note that after we haue imbraced Christ by faith, that alone is sufficient to saluatiō. But the latter member which Luke addeth by & by, doth better expresse the nature of faith, Paul and Silas command the keeper of the prison to beleue in the son of god. Do they precisely stay in this voice only? Yea it foloweth in Luke in the text, that they preached the word of the Lord. Therefore we see how that faith is not a light or dry opiniō cōcerning vnknown things, but a plain & distinct knowledge of Christ, conceiued out of the gospell.

Ch. 15. 9.

Again if the preaching of the Gospel bee absent, there shal no faith remaine any longer. To conclude, Luke coupleth faith with preaching & doctrine, & after that he hath brieflie spokē of faith, hee doth by way of expositiō shew the true and lawful way of beleuing. Therfore in steed of that inuētiō of intangled faith, wherof the papists bable, let vs holde faith infolded in the word of God, that it may vnfold to vs the power of Christ.

33 *He was baptised and all his household.* Luke doth again cōmend the godly zeale of the keeper, that he did consecrate all his whole house to the Lord: wherin doth also appeare the grace of God, in that he brought al his whole family vnto a godly cōsent. And we must also note the notable exchange: he was of late about to murder himself, because hee thought that Paul & the rest were escaped; but now laying aside al feare, he bringeth them home. So that we see how faith doth animate and incourage those to behaue themselves stoutly, who before had no hart. And surely when we droupe through feare & doubtfulness, there is no better matter of boldnes, then to be able to cast al our cares into Gods bolome: that no dāger may terrify vs frō doing our dutie, whiles that we looke for an end at Gods hand, such as he shal see to be most profitable.

34 *Hereioyed that he beleued.* The external profession of faith was before commended in the layler: now the inward fruit therof is described. When he did lodge the Apostles, & was not afraide of punishment, but did courteously intertaine them in his own house; otherwise then hee was inioyned by the magistrate, he did testifie that his faith was not idle. And that ioy wherof Luke speaketh in this place is a singuler good thing, which euery man hath from his faith. There is no greater tormēt then an euil conscience: for the vnbeleeuers, though they seeke by all meanes to bring rhemselues into a certain amasednes, yet because they haue no peace with God, they must needs quake and tremble. But admit they perceiue not their present torments, yea they rage and playe the mad men, through mad and vnbrideled licentiousnes: yet are they neuer quiet, neither do they inioy quiet ioy. Therefore sincere and quiet stable ioy proceedeth from faith alone, when we perceiue that God is merciful to vs. In this respect Zacharias saith, Reioyce and be gladdē O daughter Sion, behold thy king commeth. Yea this effect is euery where in the scripture attributed to faith, that it maketh the soules ioiful. Therefore let vs know that faith is not a vaine or dead imagination: but a liuely sealing of the grace of God, which bringeth perfect ioy by reason of the certainty of saluation whereof it is meet that the wicked be voyde, who doe both flie from the God of peace, & disturbe al righteousness.

35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the apparitors, saying, Let these men goe.*

36 *And the keeper of the prison tolde these woordes to Paule, The magistrates haue sent to loose you. Now therefore going out, depart in peace.*

37 *And Paul said to them, After that they haue beaten vs openly before our cause was known, seeing that we be Romaines, they haue cast vs into prison: & now they cast vs out priuily? No surely: but let them come themselves & seich vs out.*

38 *And*

- 38 *And the apparitors told these wordes to the magistrates: who feared after that they heard that they were Romanes.*
 39 *And they came and besought them: and when they had brought them out, they requested them that they would depart out of the citie.*
 40 *And comming out of the prison, they entred in vnto Lydia, & when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.*

35 *When it was day.* The question is, how it came to passe that the Iudges did so sodainly change their purpose. The day before, they had commaunded that Paul & Silas should be bound with fetters, as if they meant to punish them cruelly: now they let them goe free. At least if they had heard them, it might haue bin that the knowledge of the cause had brought them to be more gentle and better minded. But it appeareth that forasmuch as the matter stood as yet stil in one state, they wer brought vnto repentance of their owne accorde. I answer that there is no other thing here set downe, but that which falleth out most commonly, when sedition is once raised. For not onely the mindes of the common people begin to rage, but also the tempest carrieth away the gouernours also, no doubt peruerfly: for we know that of Virgill,

*And as amidst a mightie roue, when discord of is bred,
 And baser froward minded men, with furious rage are led,
 Footwith flies fire, and stones are flouing, madnes doth tooles supplie,
 Then if on the sodain they, doe any one espie,
 Whom loue to common wealth, and iust desares haue reuerent made,
 They hush, and eeke assent: iue stand, to heare what will be said:
 He gouerns both their will and rage,
 With wordes their wrath he doth asuage.*

Therefore there can be nothing more vnseemely, than that in a whot tumult, the iudges should be set on fire with the people: but it falleth out so for the most part. Therefore whē those officers saw the people vp, they thought ther was cause enough, why they should beat the apostles with rods. But now they are caused with shame and infamie to suffer punishment for their lightnes. Peraduenture also when they enquire of the beginning of the tumult, they find those who had deceived the people, in the fault: therefore when they had found out that Paul and Silas were innocent, they let them goe, though too late. By which example those which beare rule are taught to beware of too much hast. Again we see, howe carelesly Magistrates flatter themselues in their owne offences, which they know full well, they haue committed, especially when they haue to doe with vnknownen and base persons. When these men graunt free libertie to Paul and Silas to depart, they are not ignorant that they had before done them iniurie: yet they thinke it will be sufficient if they do not continue to do them iniurie still, and to bee more cruel vpon the. The apparitors are called *Rablouchoi*, of the staues which they did bear: whereas the ensignes of the Seargeants were hatchets bound about with rods.

After that they haue beaten vs openly. Their defence consisteth vpon two

points, that they raged against, and cruelly intreated the body of a man that was a Roman: secondly, that they did that contrary to the order of law. We shall see afterward that Paul was a citizen of Rome. But it was straitly provided by Portius lawe, by the lawes of Sempronius, and also by many moe, that no man should haue power of life or death ouer any citizen of Rome, but the people. Notwithstanding it may seeme to be a strange thing that Paul did not maintain his right before he was bearen with rods: for the iudges might honestly excuse themselves by his silence: but it is to be thought that he was not hearde in the midst of the heat of the tumult. If any man object that he doeth nowe seek remedie too late and out of season: yea that he doth catch at a vain & foolish comfort, when he requireth that the magistrates come themselves: wee may readily answer: Paul was like to fare neuer a whit the better therefore: but we must marke that he meant nothing lesse then to provide for his owne priuate commoditie: but that he might ease the brethren, somewhat afterward, that the magistrates might not be so bold as to rage so freely against the good & innocent brethren. Because he had gottē their heads vnder his girdle, he translated his right to help the brethren, that they might be born with. This was the cause for which he did chide the. And so Paul did wisely vse the opportunitie offered him: as we must neglect nothing which may make for the brideling of the enimies; that they take not to themselves so much libertie to oppress or vex the innocent: forasmuch as the Lord bringeth to our hands such helps not in vain: notwithstanding let vs remember that if we haue byn iniured in any thing we must not repay iniuries: but we must only indeuour to stay their lust, least they hurt others in like sort.

38 *They were afraid because they were Romanes.* They are not once moued with the other point because they had handled innocents: cruelly, without discretion: and yet that was the greater reproch. But because they did not feare that any man would punish them: they were not moued with Gods iudgement: this is the cause that they doe carelesly passe ouer that which was objected concerning iniurie done by the: only they are afraid of the officers of the Romans, & least they shuld be beheaded for violating the libertie in the body of a citizen. They knewe that this was death if any of the chiefe gouernours shoulde commit it, then what should become of the officers of one free citie? Such is the feare of the wicked: because they haue an amazed conscience before God, they doe long time flatter themselves in all sinnes, vntill the punishment of men hang ouer their heads.

40 *When they sawe &c.* They were desired to part presently: yet it became them to regard the brethren, least the tender seede of the Gospell should perish, & vndoubtedly they would haue taried longer, if they had been suffered: but the praieres & requests of the magistrates were imperious & armed, which they are inforced to obey. Neuertheles they foreflow not their necessary duty, but they exhort the brethren to be constant. And whereas they went straight to Lydia, it is a token, that though the church wer increased, yet that womā was the chief eue of a great nūber, as touching diligēce in duties of godlines: & that appeareth more plainly therby, because al the godly wer assembled in her house.

CHAP. XVII.

1. **A**ND when they had journeyed through Amphipolis and Appollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a Synagogue of the Iewes.

2. And as his manner was, Paul entred in vnto them, & three Sabbathes disputed with them out of the scriptures,

3. Opening and alleaging that Christ must haue suffred and rise againe from the dead: and that this is Christ, whom saith he, I preach to you.

4. And certaine of them beleued, and were ioyned to Paul and Silas, & of religious Grecians a great multitude, and of chiefe women not a few.

1. They came to Thessalonica. We know not why Paul attēpted nothing at Amphipolis & Apollonia, which were notwithstanding famous cities, as appeareth by Plinie: saue only because he followed the spirit of God as his guide: & took occasion by the present matter, as occasion was offered, to speake or hold his peace: & peraduenture he did also assay to do some good there, but because it was without any good successe, therefore Luke passeth ouer it. And whereas being beaten at Philippos, & scarce escaping out of great danger, he preacheth Christ at Thessalonica, it appeareth thereby how coragious he was to keep the course of his calling, and how bold he was euer now & then to enter into new dangers. This so inuincible fortitude of minde, & such patient induring of the croffe, doe sufficiently declare, that Paul laboured not after the maner of mē, but that he was furnished with the heauēly power of the spirit. And this was also wōderful patiēce in him, in that entring in vnto the Iewes whose vnbridled frowardnes he had so often tried, he proceedeth to procure their saluation. But because he knew that Christ was giuen to the Iewes for saluation, & that hee himself was made an Apostle vpon this condition, that he shuld preach repē- tance & faith, first to the Iewes & then to the Gentiles, cōmitting the successe of his labor to the Lord, he obeyeth his cōmandment (thogh he had no great hope to do good.) He semed before to haue taken his last farewel of the Iews, whē he said, it was behoueful that the kingdom of god shuld be first preached to you: but because ye receiue it not, behold we turne to the Gentiles: but that harder sentence must be restrayned to that company, who had wickedly reiect- ed the Gospel when it was offred vnto them, & made themselues vnworthy the grace of God. And toward the natiō it self, Paul ceaseth not to do his em- bassage: by which example we be taught, that we ought to make so greate account of the calling of God, that no vnthākfulnes of men may be able to hin- der vs, but that we proceed to be careful for their saluatiō, so long as the Lord appointeth vs to bee their ministers. And it is to bee thought that euen now there were some who on the first sabboth refused sound doctrine, but their fro- wardnes did not hinder him, but that he came againe vpon other Sabbathes.

2. He disputed. Luke setteth down first, what was the sum of the disputatiō: to wit, that Iesus the son of Mary is Christ, who was promised in times past in the law & the prophets, who by the sacrifice of his death did make satisfactiō for the sins of the world, & brought righteousness, & life by his resurrectiō: secondly how he proued that which he taught. Let vs hādle this second member first. Luke saith that he disputed out of the scriptures: therefore the proofes of faith must be fet frō the mouth of god alone. If we dispute about matters which cō- cern mē, the let human resōs take place: but in the doctrine of faith, the autho-

of God alone must reigne, and vpon it must we depend. All men confesse that this is true, that we must stay our selues vpon God alone; yet there be but a few, which heare him speake in the scriptures. But and if that maxime take place among vs; that the scripture commeth of God: the rule either of teaching or of learning ought to be taken no where els. Whereby it doth also appeare, with what diuelishe furie the papists are driuen, when they denie that there can any certaintie be gathered out of the scriptures; and therefore they hold that we must stand to the decrees of men. For I demaund of them whether Paul did obserue a right order in disputing or no? at least let them blush for shame, that the worde of the Lord was more reuerenced in an vnbeleeuing nation, then it is at this day among them. The Iewes admit Paul & suffer him when he disputeth out of the scriptures: the Pope and all his, count it a meere mocke, when the scripture is cited: as if God did speake doubtfully there, and did with vaine boughts mocke men. Hereunto is added that bicause there is at this day much more light in the scripture, and the trueth of God shineth there more cleerely, then in the law and prophets. For in the Gospel Christ, who is the sonne of righteousness doeth shed out his beam with perfect brightnes vpon vs, for which cause the blasphemy of the papists is the more intollerable, whiles that they wil make the word of God as yet vncertain. But let vs know, as faith can bee grounded no where els then in the word of the Lord, so we must only stand to the testimonie thereof in al controuersies.

3 *Opening.* In this place he describeth the sum or subiect of the disputation: and he putteth down two members concerning Christ, that He must haue died and risen againe, & that the son of Mary which was crucified is Christ. When the question is concerning Christ, there come 3. things in question. Whether he be, who he is, & what he is. If Paul had had to deale with the gentiles, he must haue set his beginning farther: because they had heard nothing concerning Christ: nether do profane mé conceiue that they need a mediator. But this point was out of doubt among the Iewes, to whom the mediator was promised: wherefore Paul omitteth that as superfluous, which was receiued by common consent of al men. But because there was nothing more harde then to bring the Iewes to confesse that Iesus who was crucified was the redeemer, therefore Paul beginneth with this, that it was meet that Christ should die: that he may remoue the stunbling blocke of the crosse, and yet we must not thinke that he recited the bare history, but he taketh an vndoubted principle, that the causes were shewed why Christe must haue suffered & rise againe: to wit because he preached of the ruine of mankind, of sin & of the punishment thereof, of the iudgement of God, and of the eternal curse wherein we be al inwrapped. For euen the scripture calleth vs hither, when it foretelleth the death of Christ. As Isaias saith not simply that Christ should die, but plainly expressing, because we haue al erred, & euery one hath gone his owne way: he assigneth the cause of his death, that God hath laid vpon him al our iniquities: that the chastisement of our peace is vpon him, that by his stripes we may bee healed: that

that by making satisfaction for vs; hee hath purchased righteousness for vs. So doth Daniel shew the force and fruit of his death in his 9. chapter, when he saith that some must be sealed vp, that eternall righteousness may succeed. And surely there is no more apt or effectuell way to proue the office of Christ, then when men being humbled with the feeling of their miseries, see that there is no hope left, vnlesse they be reconciled by the sacrifice of Christ. The laying away their pride, they humbly embrace his crosse, wherof they were before both weary & ashamed. Therefore we must come vnto the same fountaines at this day, from which Paul setteth the proöfe of the death and resurrection of Christ. And that definition, brought great light to the second chapter. It had not bene so easie a matter for Paul to prooue, and certainly to gather, that the sonne of Mary is Christ, vnlesse the Iewes had been taught before what manner redeemer they were to hope for. And when that doth once appeare, it doth only remain that those things be applied to Christ, which the scripture doth attribute to the mediator. But this is the summe of our faith, that we know that the sonne of Marie is that Christ & mediator, which God promised from the beginning, that done, that we knowe & vnderstand why he died and rose againe: that we do not feigne to our selues any earthly king: but that we seeke in him righteousness, and all parts of our saluatiön. Both which things Paul is said to haue proued out of the Scriptures: we must know that the Iewes were not so blockish, nor so impudent, as they be at this day. Paul might haue drawn arguments from the sacrifices & from all the worship of the law, wherat the Iewes narre at this day like dogs. It is wel knowne howe vnseemelily they rent and corrupt other places of Scripture. At that daye they had some curtesie in them: also they did somewhat reuerence the scripture: so that they were not altogether such as would not be taught: at this daye the yeyle is laid ouer their hearts, so that they can see no more in the cleere light then moales.

4 Certaine of them beleued. We see here the fruite of Paul his disputation. He prooued flatly that Iesus was Christ, who by his death did appease the fathers wrath for vs, and whose resurrection is the life of the worlde. Yet onely certaine of the Iewes beleue: the rest are blind at noone day, and with deafe eares refuse the certaine and playne truth. This is also woorth the noting, that whereas onely a fewe Iewes beleued, a great multitude of the Gretians who were farre farther off, came vnto the faith. To what end can you say they weer noussled vp in the doctrine of the law from their childhood, saue onely that they might bee more estranged from God? Therefore the Lord doth now begin to shew some tokens of that blindness in them which the prophetes doe oftentimes denounce vnto them. Notwithstanding he declareth by this that his couenaut was not in vaine, because he did at least gather some of that people vnto himselfe, that the sparkles of the election may shyne in the remnaunt, which was sauéd freely. Luke doth moreouer teache that they did not beleue the sayings of Paul onely so farre forth, that they subscribed vnto them with a cold consent: but that they did

Dan. 9. 24.

2. Cor. 3. 15.

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testifie their earnest affection, because they had ioyned themselves to Paul and Silas as companions, & prouoked against themselves the hatred of their nation by the free profession of the Gospel. For what meaneth this adioyning, saue only because they professed that they allowed that doctrine which he deliuered, and that they sought his part? For there is nothing more contrarie to faith, then if when we knowe the truth of God, we stand notwithstanding in doubt, and are doth to toyne our selues to any side. If any man had rather expound it, that they did ioyned themselves to Paul and Silas, because they were desirous to learne, that they might be better instructed at home: thereby doth also appear the lively heat of faith: and that doth alwaies continue vnmoueable, that, No man doth truly belecue in Christ, saue only he which doth giue ouer himselfe to him, and doth freely and willingly fight vnder his banner.

Ephes. 2. 12.

Of religious Grecians a multitude. Because these had learned the first principles of Godlinesse, they were neerer to the kingdome of GOD than others who had alwayes layd in the filth of superstition. Notwithstanding the question is howe the Grecians came by religion: who beeing bewitched with wicked errors and dotings; were without God: as Paul teacheth. But wee must knowe that whither soeuer the Iewes were exiled, there went with them some seede of godlinesse, and there was some smell of pure doctrine spread abroad. For their miserable scattering abroad was so turned vnto a contrarie end by the wonderfull counsell of God, that it did gather those vnto the true faith who did wander in error. And though religion were also corrupt among them with manie wicked inuentions: yet because most of the Gentiles were wearie of their madnesse, they were by this short summe inticed vnto Iudaisme, that, Nothing is more safe than the worshipp of one and the true God. Therefore by religious Grecians vnderstande those who had some tast of the true and lawfull worship of God; so that they were not any longer giuen to grosse Idolatrie. Though as I haue said, it is to be thought that it was onely a light and obscure tast, which was farre from true instruction. Wherefore Luke doth improperly giue them such an honorable title. But as the Spirit of God doth sometimes vouchsafe some rude beginning and first exercise of faith, or the onely preparation the name of faith: so they are called in this place Religious, who hauing taken their leaue of Idols, had begun to acknowledge one God.

And though that confused or obscure persuasion doth not deserue of it selfe to bee counted religion: yet because it is a stepp where by wee come neerer vnto God, it taketh the name of the consequent, as they call it, or of that which followeth. Yea the blinde and superstitious feare of God, is sometimes called religion: not because it is so in deed; but vnderstand properly, to note the difference betweene a meane worship of God, and grosse and Epicurish contempt. Nevertheless, let vs knowe that the trueth and the sounde doctrine of the worde of God; is the rule of godlinesse, so that there can be no religion without the true light of vnderstanding.

- 5 And the vnbeleewing Iewes being moued with enmie, and taking to them certaine vacabonds, froward fellows, and hauing assembled the multitude, they made a tumult in the citie: and besetting the house of Iason, they sought to bring them out vnto the people.
- 6 And when they had not found them: the drew Iason and certain brethren vnto the gouernours of the citie, crying, Those who haue troubled the whole world, are come hither also,
- 7 Whom Iason hath receiued priuily: and all these doe contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king; one Iesus.
- 8 And they troubled the multitude and the magistrates of the Citie when they heard these things:
- 9 And when they had receiued sufficient assurance of Iason and the rest, they let them goe.
- 10 And forthwith the brethren sent forth Paul & Silas by night vnto Berrher, who when they were come they went into the Synagogue of the Iewes.

5 And beeing moued with enmie. Wee see howe Paule could not where erect the kingdome of Christe without some conflict. For so soone as any fruite of doctrine appeared, there arose persecution therewithall. But because hee knewe that hee was to warre agaynst Sathan and the wickednesse of the worlde, hee was not onely hardened against all assaultes: but hee was more incouraged more courageously to proceede. Therefore all the seruautes of Christe must bee content with this one example of him, if they see that their labour doeth yeelde some fruite, they must recompence all manner persecutions with this rewarde. And this place teacheth that the zeale wherewith the vnbeleeuers are carried headlong and set on fire, is nothing else but furious force: because it is not gouerned by the prudence of the spirite, neyther yet with righteousnesse or equitie. And though they doe alwayes pretende the name of GOD for an excuse of their disordered zeale: yet this historie doth plainly declare that meere hypocrisie doth reigne inwardly, and that all corners of their hearts are stuffed with poisoned malice. These enemies of Paul did boast that they were defenders of the Lawe of God: and that they did hate Paule, and contend with him onely in defence thereof.

Why doe they then arme the wicked, and conspire together with them to raise tumult? Why then do they also before a prophane Magistrate bring the Gospel in that contempt, which might haue redounded to the contempt of the Lawe? Such sedition doeth plainly declare, that they were moued with nothing lesse than with desire to please God, to bee thus hoat against Paul. For to what ende doe they beset Iasons house, and striue disorderlie to plucke out Paule thence, saue onelie that they may set him before the people to bee stoned? Therefore let vs knowe that wicked zeale, which is hoat in superstitious men, is alwayes infected with hypocrisie and malice. And this is the cause that it breaketh out into crueltie without keeping anie measure.

Taking to them certaine vacabounds. The Greeke word which Luke vseth doth signifie sluggards and men whereof there ought no account to be made, who hauing nothing wherwith they could keep themselves occupied at home, did run vp and downe idle: or bold fellowes and hungrie, who are ready to forswere themselves, to raise tumults and to be at one end of euery wicked fact. Whereby it doeth likewise appeare that their owne consciences tolde them that they did amisse, seeing they gat wicked men to take their part and to giue them their consent. For seeing the magistrate did fauour them, what did moue them to raise that tempest, saue onely because they had no hope to haue any successe vnlesse matters should be out of order and all should be in an vprore? And Luke describeth how such fannes did raise sedition: to wit, they gathered the people together in troupes, and spred abroad their poison here & there, vntill they were strong ynough to make an assault: which pollicie is too common among seditious fellowes, as those cities which are subiect to this mischiefe doe fulwel know.

6 Those men who haue troubled the whole worlde. This is the state of the Gospel, to haue those vprores which Satan raiseth, imputed to it. This is also the maliciousnes of the enemies of Christ, to lay the blame of tumults vpon holy and modest teachers, which they themselves procure. Assuredly the Gospel is not preached to this end that it may set men together by the eares: but rather that it may keepe them in peace being reconciled to God. When Christ doth meekely wil vs there, to come vnto him, Satan and the wicked, rage. Therefore Paul and Silas might easily haue defended themselves: but it was requisite for them to suffer this false slander for a time: and so long as they were not heard, to put it vp quietly. And the Lord meant by their example to teach vs, that wee must not giue place to slanders & false reports, but we must stand stoutly in maintaining the truth, being readie to heare euill for things done well. Wherefore away with the peruerse wisdom of some, who to the end they may escape false slanders, cease not to betray Christ & his gospel through their trecherous moderation: as though their good name were more precious than Pauls and such like: yea than the sacred name of God which is not free from blasphemies.

7 All these men &c. The second point of the accusation is this, that they violate the maiestie of the Empire of Rome. A great and grievous crime: yet too impudently forged. Paul and Silas sought to erect the kingdome of Christ which is spirituall. The Iewes knewe well that this might be done without doing any iniurie to the Romane empire. They knewe that they meant nothing lesse, than to ouerthrow the publike estate, or to take from Cæsar his authoritie. Therefore the Iewes catch at the pretence of treason, that they may oppresse the innocent with the enuy of the crime alone. Neither doth Satan cease at this day to bleare mens eyes with such smokes and mysts. The Papists know fulwell, and they bee sufficiently equiuit before God, that that is more than false which they lay to our charge, That we ouerthrow al ciuill gouernment: that Lawes and iudgements are quite taken away: that the authoritie
... of

of Kings is subuerted by vs: and yet they be not ashamed to the end they may make all the whole worlde offended with vs, falsely to report that we be enimies to publike order. For we must note, that the Iewes doe not onely alledge that Cæsars commandements were broken, because Paul and Silas durst presume to alter & innouate somewhat in religion: but because they said there was another king. This crime was altogether forged. But if at any time religion enforce vs to resist tyrannicall edicts and commaundementes, which forbid vs to giue due honour to Christ, and due worshippe to God: wee may then iustly say for our selues, that wee are not rebellious against kings: for they bee not so exalted, that they may goe about like Gyants to pull God out of his seat and throne. That excuse of Daniel was true, that, Hee had not offended the king, whereas notwithstanding hee had not obeyed his wicked commaundement: neither had he iniuried mortall man, because he had preferred God before him. So let vs faithfully pay to princes the tributes which are due to them, let vs bee readie to giue them all ciuill obedience: but if being not content with their degree, they goe about to plucke out of our hands the feare & worship of god, there is no cause why any should say that we despise them: because we make more account of the power and maiesty of God.

8 *They raised the multitude.* We see howe vniustly the holy men were handled, because they had no place granted them to defend theselues, it was an easie matter to oppresse them, though they were guiltlesse. We see likewise that it is no newe matter, for magistrates to be carried away with the rage of the people as with a tempest, especially when the iniurie toucheth those who are straungers and vnknownen, at whose hands they looke for no reward: because they will not come in daunger for nothing. For then they care not for reason or equitie, neither doe they heare the matter: but one driuerh forward another without any resistance, and all things are done out of order, as when they runne vnto some great fire. But it came to passe by the singular goodnesse of God, that so great heate was stayed by and by: for so soone as the magistrates professe that they will knowe farther of the matter, the multitude is appeased: assurance is taken: and at length the matter is ended.

10 *They sent them out to Berreha.* Heereby it appeareth that Paul his labour brought forth fruite in a small time: for though the brethren send forth him & Silas: yet they adioine themselues as voluntary companions to their daunger and crosse by this ductie. But the constancie of Paul is vncredible, because hauing had such experience of their stubbornesse and malice of his nation: he doeth neuer cease to trie whether he can bring any to Christ: namely, seing he knew that he was bounde both to Iewes and Gentiles, no iniurie of men could leade him away from his calling. So all the seruants of Christ must so wraastle with the malice of the world, that they shake not off Christs yoke with what iniuries soeuer they be prouoked.

- 11 And those were noble men among the Thessalonians, who had received the word with all readines of minde, daily searching the scriptures whether these things were so.
- 12 And manie of them beleueed, and honest women which were Grecians, and men not a few:
- 13 But when the Iewes of Thessalonica knewe, that Paul did also preach the word of God at Berrhea, they came thither also mouing the multitudes.
- 14 And then streightway the brethren sent forth Paul, that he might goe as it were vnto the sea: but Silas and Timotheus remained there.
- 15 Moreover those which guided Paul, brought him euen vnto Athens. And when they had receiued commandement to Silas and Timotheus, that they should come to him with speed, they departed.

11 Did excell in nobilitie. Luke returneth againe vnto the men of Thessalonica. The remembrance of Christ might haue bin thought to haue bin buried by the departure of Paul, and surely it is a wonder that that small light which began to shine, was not quite put out, and that the seede of sounde doctrine did not wither away, which had neede continually to bee watered that it might spring vp. But after Pauls departure, it appeared howe effectually and fruitfull his preaching had beene. For those who had onely tasted of the first principles of godlinesse, doe neuertheless profit and goe forward though hee be absent, and exercise themselves in the continuall reading of the Scripture. And first Luke saith that they were of the chiefe families. For the nobilitie whereof hee maketh mention, is referred not vnto the minde, but vnto the nation. Some thinke that the men of Berrhea are compared with the men of Thessalonica, because hee saith *eugenesstons*, and not in the superlatiue degree *eugenesstous*. But I thinke that that manner of speech is visuall and common among the Grecians, which the Latines could not so well digest. Moreouer hee had saide a little before, that certaine principall women beleueed at Thessalonica, and it is not to bee thought that the men of Berrhea were preferred before those of this Citie. And there is a threefold reason why Luke maketh mention of their excellencie of byrth. Wee knowe howe hardlie men come downe from their high degree, what a rare matter it is for those who are great in the world, to vndertake the reproch of the crosse laying away their pride, and to reioyce in humilitie, as Iames commandeth.

Therefore Luke commendeth the rare efficacie and working of the Spirit of God, when he saith that these noble men were no whit hindered by the dignitie of the flesh, but that embracing the Gospel, they prepared themselves to beare the crosse, & preferred the reproch of Christ before the glory of the world. Secondly Luk meant to make known vnto vs, that the grace of Christ standeth open for all orders and degrees. In much sense Paul saith, that God would haue all men saved: least the potte and those who are base do shut the gate against the rich (though 1. Tim. 2.4. Ch. 1. did vouchsafe the former place). Therefore we see that noble men

men and those who are of the common sort are gathered together, that those who are men of honour & which are despised grow together into one bodie of the church, that al men in general may humble theſelues, & extoll the grace of God. Thirdly, Luke seemeth to note the cause why there were so manie added: and the kingdom of Christ was in such short time so spread abroad and enlarged at Thessalonica. To wit, because that was no smal helpe, that chiefe men and men of honour did shewe other men the way, because the common sort is for the most part moued by authority. And though this were no meet stay for faith & godlines, yet is it no strange thing for God to bring the vnbeleeuers (who wonder as yet in error) to himselfe, by crooked, and by wayes.

Receined the worde. This is the first thing which he commendeth in the men of Thessalonica, that with a willing and ready desire they receyued the Gospell. Secondlie, that they confirmed their faith by diligent inquisition. So that their faith and godlinesse are commended in the beginning for forwardnesse, and in proesse they are prayed for their constancie and seruent desire they had to profit. And surely this is the first entrance into faith, that we be readie to follow, and that abandoning the vnderstanding and wisdom of the fleshe, wee submit our selues to Christ, by him to be taught and to obey him. Also Paul himself in adorning the Thessalonians with this title, doeth agree with Saint Luke. 1. The. 2. 13

As touching the second member, this diligence is no smal vertue wherunto Luke saith, the faithfull were much giuen, for confirmation of their faith. For many who at the first breake out, giue them selues straightway to idlenes while that they haue no care to profite, and so loose that small seed, which they had at the first. But two inconueniences may bee in this place obiected. For it seemeth to be a point of arrogancie, in that they inquire that they may iudge: & it seemeth to bee a thing altogether disagreeing with that readines wherof he spake of late: secondly for as much as inquisition is a signe of doubtfulness: it followeth that they were before indued with no faith which hath alwayes assurance & certaintie ioyned and linked with it. Vnto the first obiection I answer, that Luke his words ought not so to be vnderstood, as if the Thessalonians tooke vpon them to iudge, or as though they disputed whether the truth of God were to be receiued: they did onely examine Pauls doctrine by the rule and square of the scripture, euen as golde is tried in the fire. For the Scripture is the true touchstone whereby all doctrines must be tried. If any mā say that this kind of trial is doubtful, forasmuch as the Scripture is oftentimes doubtful, and is interpreted diuerse wayes: I say, that we must also adde the iudgement of the Spirit, who is not without cause called the Spirit of discretion. But the faithfull must iudge of euery doctrine no otherwise than out of, and according to the Scriptures, hauing the Spirit for their leader and guide. And by this meanes is refuted that sacrilegious quippe of the Papiſts, Because there can be nothing gathered certainly out of the Scriptures, faith doth depend onely vpon the determination of the Church.

For when the spirit of God doth commend the men of Thessalonica, he prescribeth to vs a rule in their example. And in vaine should we search the scriptures vnles they haue in the light enough to teach vs. Therefore let this remaine as a most sure *maxime*, that, No doctrine is worthie to be beleeued, but that which we find to bee grounded in the scriptures. The pope will haue all that receiued without any more adoe, whatsoeuer he doth blunder out at his pleasure: but shall hee bee preferred before Paul, concerning whose preaching it was lawfull for the disciples to make inquisition? And let vs note that this is not spoken of any visured councell, but of a smal assembly of men: whereby it doth better appeare that euerye man is called to reade the scripture. So likewise making of search doth not disagree with the forwardnesse of faith: for so soone as any man doth harken, and being desirous to learne doeth shew himselfe attentiu: he is now bent and apt to be taught, though hee do not fully giue his consent. For examples sake, An vnknown teacher shall profes that he doth bring true doctrine: I will come being readie to heare, and my mind shall be framed vnto the obedience of the truth: neuerthelesse I wil weigh with my selfe what manner doctrine it is which he bringeth, neither wil I embrace any thing but the certaine trueth, and that which I know to be the trueth. And this is the best moderation, when being fast bound with the reuerence of God, we heare that willingly and quietly which is set before vs, as proceeding from him. Neuertheles we beware of the seducing subtiltie of men: neither doe our minds throw themselves headlong with a blind rage, to belecue euery thing without aduisement. Therefore the searching mentioned by Luke, doth not tende to that end, that we may be slow and vnwilling to belecue: but rather readines with iudgement is made the meane betweene lightnes & stubbornnesse. Now must we answere the second obiection. Faith is contrarie to doubtfulness: he which inquireth doubteth: therefore it followeth that for as much as the Thessalonians inquire and make search touching the doctrine of Paul, they were voyde offaith as yet. But the certaintie offaith doth not hinder the confirmation thereof. I call that confirmation when the trueth of God is more and more sealed vp in our hearts, whereof notwithstanding we did not doubt before. For examples sake, I heare out of the Gospel that I am reconciled to god through the grace of Christ, and that my sins are purged through his holy blood: there shall be some testimonie vttered which shall make me beleue this. If afterward I examine and search the scriptures more thoroughly, I shall finde other testimonies oftentimes, which shall not onely help my faith, but also encrease it and establish it, that it may be more sure and settled. In like sort as concerning vnderstanding, faith is increased by reading the Scriptures. If any man object againe, that those men doe attribute but small authoritie to Pauls doctrine, who search the scriptures whether these things be so: I answere, that such are the proceedings of faith, that they sometimes seeke for that in the Scripture; whereof they are already perswaded by God, and haue the inward testimonie of the spirit. And Luke doth not say that the faith of the Thessalonians was in
all

all points perfect: but he doth onely declare how they were brought to Christ, and how they did profite in faith, vntill the absolute building of godlines might be erected among them.

12 *And many beleued.* This is not referred vnto the sentence next going before, as if those of whom he spake beganne to beleue, making choise of some of them: for that were an absurde thing. But Luke his meaning is: because many were added by their example, the Church was increased in that Citie. And hitherto hath Luke declared the first beginning of the Church of Thessalonica, least any man should thinke that Pauls labours did perish through his sodain and violent departure: for vles I be much deceiued, he sheweth for this purpose what fruit his preaching brought forth in the other Citie, before he came to the exile of Berthea.

13 *And when the Iewes.* We see how the Iewes were carried to and fro with such hatred of the Gospel as coulede neuer be appeased. For they doe not onely expell Christ furiously when hee is offered vnto them at home but when they heare that he is preached elsewhere, they run thither like madde men. But we must not so much in this place consider the forme of the nation, as the desperate malice of Satan who pricketh forward those which be his to trouble the kingdome of Christ, and to destroy mans saluation, & he vseth them as fannes to raise sedition. Wherefore let vs know, that when at this day so many furious enimies doe set themselves against the faithfull ministers of Christ, it is not men which procure the war, but it is Satan the father of lying, who doth goe about all these things, that he may ouerthrow the kingdome of Christ. And though there be not alwayes the same forme in fighting & encountering: yet will Satan neuer cease to make weary those whom hee knoweth to serue Christ faithfully either with open war, or secreat lying in waite; or Iohn 8. 44. domesticall combates.

16 *And as Paul waited for them at Athens, his Spirit was sore grieved in him,* forasmuch as he saw the Citie given to idolatrie.

17 *Therefore he disputed in the Synagogue with the Iewes and religious men, and in the market daily with those which light vpon him.*

18 *And certaine Epicurists, and Philosophers of the stoicks disputed with him, and some said, What will this Babler say? And other some, He seemeth to be a* *or gods,*

19 *And when they had caught him they led him, to Mars street, saying; May we know what new doctrine this is which thou vtterest?*

20 *For thou bringest certaine new things to our eares. Therefore we will know what these things meane.*

21 *And all the men of Athens and the straungers which were there, gaue themselves to nothing else but to speake or heare some new thing.*

16 *Was sore grieved.* Though Paul whither soeuer he came did stoutly execute that function of teaching which he knewe was inioyned him: yet Luke sheweth that he was more incensed and moued at Athens, be-

cause he saw idolatry reigne more there then in any other place for the most part. The whole world was then full of Idols: the pure worship of God could be found no where: and there were euery where innumerable monstres of superstitions, but Satan had made the Citie of Athens more mad than any other Citie, so that the people thereof were carried headlong with greater madnes vnto their wicked & peruerse rites. And this example is worth the noting that the Citie which was the mansion house of wisdom, the fountaine of all arts, the mother of humanitie, did exceed all other in blindness and madnes. We know with what commendations wittie and learned men did set forth the same, and she had conceiued so great good liking of her selfe that shee counted those rude whom she had not pulished. But the holy Ghost condemning the whole world of ignorance and blockishnes, saith that those masters of liberall sciences were bewitched with an vnwonted madnes. Whence we gather what mans wit can do in matters which concerne God. Neither neede we doubt of this but that the Lord suffered the men of Athens to fall into extreme madnes, that all the worlde might learne by them, and that they might teach all ages that the foresight and wit of mans minde being holpen with learning and instruction doeth altogether dore and is meere foolishnes when it cometh to the kingdome of God. They had vndoubtedly their cloakes and colours wherewith they did excuse their worshippings how preposterous and corrupt so euer they were. And yet notwithstanding it is certain that they did not onely deceiue men with childish and friuolous toies, but that they themselues were deluded shamefully with grosse and filthy iugglings, as if they were deprived of common sense & were altogether blockish and brutish. And as we learne what manner religion proceedeth from mans vnderstanding, and that mans wisdom is nothing else but a shop of all errors: so we may know that the men of Athens being drunke with their owne pride, did erre more filthilie than the rest. The antiquitie, the pleasantnesse and bewtie of the Citie did puffe them vp, so that they did boast that the Gods came thence. Therefore forasmuch as they did pull downe God from heaven that they might make him an inhabitant of their citie: it was meete that they should be thrust downe into the nethermost hell. Howsoeuer it be, the vanitie of mans wisdom is here marked with eternal infamie by the Spirit of God: because where it was principally resident, there was the darknes more thicke: idolatry did reigne most of all there: and satan carried mens minds too and fro more freely by his mockes & iugling. Now let vs come vnto Paul, Luke saith, forasmuch as hee saw the Citie so giuen to Idolatry, his Spirit waxed hore or was moued: where he doth not attribute vnto him indignation onely, neither doeth he onely say that he was offended with that spectacle, but he expresseth the vnwonted heat of holy anger, which sharpened his zeale, so that he did addresse himselfe more feruently vnto the worke. And here we must note two things. For in that Paul was wroth when he saw the name of God wickedly prophaned, & his pure worship corrupted: he did thereby declare that nothing was to him more precious than the glorie of God.

Which

Which zeal ought to be of great force among vs: as it is in the Psalme, *Psal. 69. 10.*
 The zeal of thine house hath eatē me vp. For is is a common rule of al
 the godly, that so soone as they see their heavenly father blasphemed, *2. Pet. 2. 8.*
 they be fore vexed: as Peter teacheth that the godly man Lot, because
 he could not cure most filthy facts, did vex his heart. And teachers must
 about all other be feruent: as Paul saith, that hee is gealous that he may *2. Cor. 11. 2.*
 retain the church in true chastity. And those who are not touched whē
 they see and heare God blasphemed, & do not only wink therat, but also
 carelessly passe ouer it, are not worthie to be counted the childre of god,
 who at least doe not giue him so much honour as they doe to an earth-
 ly father. Secondly we must note that he was not so greued, that being
 cast downe through despaire, he was quite discouraged, as wee see most
 men to be far from waxing hoat or being moued, when they see the glo-
 rie of God wickedly profaned, that in professing and yttering sorow and
 sighing, they do notwithstanding rather waxe profane with others, then
 studie to reforme them. Neuertheless they haue a faire cloake for their
 sluggishnesse, that they will not procure any tumult when they are like
 to do no good. For they thinke that their attempts shall bee in vaine, if
 they striue against the wicked and violent conspiracy of the people. But
 Paul is not only not discouraged with wearisomnes, neither doth he so
 faint by reason of the hardnes of the matter, that he doth cast from him
 his office of teaching: but he is prickēd forward with a more sharp prick
 to maintaine godlinesse.

17. With the Iewes and religious men. It was an ordinarie thing with
 Paul wheresoeuer the Iewes had Synagogues, there to begin, & to offer
 Christ to his owne nation. After that, he went to the Gentiles, who ha-
 uing tasted of the doctrine of the law, though they were not as yet tho-
 rowly nouised vp in true godlines, did notwithstanding worship the god
 of Israel, & beeing desirous to learne did not refuse those thinges which
 they knew were taken out of Moses & the prophets: and because suche
 aptnes to be taught was an entrance vnto faith, yea was a certain begin-
 ning of faith, the spirit vouchsafeth them an honorable title, who being
 only lightly sprinkled with the first rudiments, drew neerer vnto the true
 God: for they be called religious. But let vs remember that they bee di-
 stinguished from others by this marke, that all the religion of the world
 may be brought to nought. Those are called worshippers of God spiritu-
 ally, who gaue their name to the god of Israel: religion is attributed to
 them alone, therefore there remaineth nothing els for the rest, but the
 reproch of Atheisme, howsoeuer they toyle and moile in superstition.
 And that for good considerations, for of whatsoeuer pompe the Idolaters
 make boast, if their inward affection be examined, there shalbe nothing
 found there but horrible contempt of god: and it shall appeare that it is
 a meere feigned colour wherwith they goe about to excuse their Idols.
18. They reasoned with him. Luke addeth nowe that Paul had a com-
 bate with the Philosophers: not that he set vpon them of set purpose, for
 as much as he knew that they were euen borne only to braule and cauille:
 but hee was inforced to enter suche a conflict contrary to his purpose:

Tit. 1.9.

as Paul himself commandeth godly teachers to be furnished with spirituall weapons, wherewith they may valiantly defend the truth, if any enemies set themselves against it. For it is not alwayes in our choise to make choise of those with whom we will deale: but the Lorde doeth often suffer stubborne and importunate mé to arise, to exercise vs, that by their gainsaying the truth may more plainly appeare: Neither is it to be doubted but that the Epicures, according to theyr wonted frowardnes, did trouble the holy man: and that the Stoicks trusting to their subtilties and cauls, did stubbornly deride him: yet the ende shall shewe that he did not dispute sophistically, neither was he caried away vnto anie vnprofitable and contentious disputation: but did obserue that modestie which hee himselfe commaundeth elsewhere: and thus must wee doe that by refuting meekely and modestly vaine cauellings, wee maye vtter that which is sound and true: and we must alwayes auoid this danger, that ambition or desire to shewe our wit, doe not inwrap vs in superfluous and vain contentions. Furthermore Luke maketh mention of two sects, which, though they were the one contrary to the other, had notwithstanding their contrary vices. The Epicures did not only despise liberal arts: but were also open enemies to them. Their philosophie was to feign that the Sun was two foot broad, that the world was made *ex atomis*, or of things which were so small that they could not be diuided or made smaller: & by deluding men thus, to blot out the wonderful workmanship which appeareth in the creatiō of the world: if they were a thousand times conuict, they were as impudent as dogs. Though they did in a word confesse that there be gods: yet they did imagine that they were idle in heauen, and that they were wholly set vpon pleasure, & that they were blessed only bicause they were idle. As they did denie that the world was created by God; as I haue said of late: so they thought that mans affaires were tossed to and fro without any gouerning, & that they were not gouerned by the celestially prouidence. Pleasure was their felicitie, not that vnbrideled & filthy pleasure, yet such as did more & more corrupt men by her enticements, being already of their owne accorde bent to pāper the flesh. They counted the immortality of their souls, but a fable, whereby it came to passe that they gaue them selues libertie to make much of their bodies. As for the Stoicks, though they said that the world was subiect to the prouidence of god, yet did they afterward throw a most filthy surmise, or rather doting, corrupt that point of their doctrine. For they did not graunt that God did gouerne the worlde by counsel, iustice, and power, but they forged a Labyrinth of the compasse or agreement of the causes, that God himself being bound with the necessitie of fate or destinie, might be carried violently with the frame of heauen: as the Poets do tie & fetter their Iupiter with golden fetters: bicause the fates or destinies do gouern when hee is about something els. Though they placed felicitie in vertue; they knew not what true vertue was, & they did pusse vp men with pride, so that they did deck themselves with that which they took from God. For though they did al abase the grace of the holy ghost, yet was there no sect more proude. They had no other fortitude, but a certain rash and immoderate fiercenesse,

Therefore

Therefore there was in Paul wonderful force of the Spirit, who standing amidst such beastes, which sought to pull him too and fro, stood firme in the sound synceritie of the Gospel: and did valiantly withstand and endure, as well the dogged malapertnes of the former sect, as the pride and craftie caillings of the other. And hereby we see more plainly, what small agreement there is betweene the heauenly wisdom and the wisdom of the flesh. For though the whole multitude were offended with the gospel: yet the Philosophers were captaines and stander-bearers in assaulting the same. For that did principally appeare in them, which Paul himselfe speaketh of the wisdom of the flesh, that, It is an enemy to the crosse of Christ: so that no man can be fit to learn the principles of the Gospel vnlesse he first abandon the same.

1. Cor. I. II.

Other some said. Luke setteth before vs two sorts of men: which both were farre from godlinesse: and yet the one sort is worse than the other. Those who are desirous to heare that againe which they call newe, first they are moued not with any right desire to learne, but with vaine curiositie. Secondly they thinke vnhonourable of the worde of God, in that they count it prophane noialtie. Yet because they giue eare, and that being in doubt, vntill they may know farther of the matter, they are not quite past hope. But the rest who proudly refuse that which is offered, yea condemne it reprochfully, do shut the gate of saluation against themselves. For this railing did proceede from monstrous pride, what meaneth this Babler? Because they neither vouchsafe to heare Paule, & also reprochfully refuse him, as if he were some common iester. Moreouer they do not loath his doctrine through rash zeale: but do openlie tread vnder foot that which is brought vnto them concerning religion, though as yet they know it not: because these are ashamed to learn any thing of a base and obscure fellowe, who had hitherto professed themselves to be teachers of all the whole world.

A declarer of new diuels. They do not take diuels in euill part; as the Scripture vseth to do: but for the lesser gods or angels, who they thought were in the midst betweene the highest God and men, whereof Plato maketh mention oftentimes. As touching the summe of the matter we must note that those things which Paul spake concerning Christ and the resurrection, seemed to them to be new diuels. Whence we gather that our faith is principally distinguished and discerned from the superstitions of the Gentiles by these marks, because it setteth forth Christ to be the sole mediator: because it teacheth vs to seeke for saluation only at his hands: because it commendeth vs to seeke remission of our sins in his death, whereby we may bee reconciled to God: because it teacheth that men are renewed & fashioned againe by his spirit, who were before prophane, & slauish to sin, that they may begin to liue righteously & holilie. Again, because fro such beginnings as do plainly declare that the kingdom of God is spiritual, it listeth vp our minds at length vnto the hope of the resurrection to come. For as concerning other things though the Philosophers do not reason purely, yet they say somewhat. Yea they speak much concerning eternal life & the immortality of the soul: but as tou-

ching faith which sheweth free reconciliation in Christ: & regeneration, whereby the Spirit of God doth restore in vs the image of God: concerning calling vpon God, and the last resurrection not a word.

19 *They brought him to Mars street.* Though this were a place appointed for iudgement, yet Luke doth not meane that Paul was brought before the seat of the iudges, that he might plead his cause before the iudges of Mars street: But that hee was brought thither, where was most commonly a great assëblee of people, that the serious disputation might be had before a great and famous audience: And admit we graunt that he was brought before the iudgement seat: yet the end doeth declare that he was not presented to the iudges, but that hee had free libertie to speake as before an audience. And that which followeth shortly after touching the nature and conditions of the men of Athens, doth sufficiently declare that their curiositie was the cause, that Paul had such audience giue him: that he had such a famous place granted him to preach Christ in: that so many came together. For in any other place it had bin a crime worthy of death, to speake in the market or in any other public place, hauing gathered a companie of people together, but there because those who did carrie about trifles, had libertie granted the to prate by reason of the immoderate desire they had to heare newes: Paul was permitted to intreat of the misteries of faith, being requested.

Gane themselves to nothing else. The two vices which Luke reciteth, do almost alwaies go together. For it falleth out seldome, that those who are desirous of noualties, are not also bablers. For that saying of Horace is most true, *Flie a demander of questions, for the same is also a blab.* And surely wee see that curious men are like rent Barrels. Furthermore both vices came of idlenes: not only because the Philosophers spent whol dayes in disputing: but because the common sort was too much set vpon noualty: neither was there any crafts man so base there, which would not thrust in himself to set in order the state of Grecia. And surely that which Luke saith here is witnessed by al writers both Greeke & Latin; that there was nothing more light, couetous, or froward than that people. Wherefore there could neuer be any certaine gouernment set downe in that Citie, which was notwithstanding the mystres of sciences. Therefore in principal power, they had notwithstanding no long liberty: neither did they euer cease off from attempting things & making many hurliburlies, vntill they brought themselves & al Grecia to vtter ruine. For whē their state was decayed, yet did not they forsake their boldnes. Therefore Cicero doth laugh at their folly, because they did no lesse fierseely set forth their decrees then, than whē they were lords ouer Grecia. Now though there were smal hope to do any good among curious mē: yet Paul did not neglect the opportunity, if peraduenture he might gain some of a great companie to Christ. Neither was this any small praise for the Gospel, in the most noble place of the Citie, and as it were in a common Theatre, to refute and openly to reprove, all forged and false worshippings; which had reigned there euen vntill this day.

22 *And standing in the midst of Mars street, he saith, Men of Athens, I see you in all things as it were more superstitious.*

- 23 For passing by & beholding your maner of worshippings, I found also an altar wherein was written, To the vnknown God. Therefore whom you worshipping ignorantly, him doe I preach vnto you.
- 24 God who hath made the worlde, and all things which are therein, seeing hee is Lord both of heauen and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands:
- 25 Neither is he worshipped with mens hands, needing any thing: seeing that he giueth to all life and breath through all things.

22 *Men of Athens.* We may diuide this Sermon of Paul into five members. For though Luke doth onlie briefly touch those things which he set downe in many words: yet I do not doubt but that he did comprehend the summe: so that he did omit none of the principall points. First Paul layeth superstition to the charge of the men of Athens, because they worship their gods at all a very venture: secondly he sheweth by naturall arguments, who and what God is, and how he is rightly worshipped. Thirdly, he inuiceth against the blockishnesse of men: who though they be created to this end, that they may knowe their creator and maker, yet doe they wander and erre in darknesse like blind men. Fourthly, he sheweth that nothing is more absurd than to draw anie purtrature of God, seeing that the mind of man is his true image: in the first place he descendeth at length vnto Christ and the resurrection of the dead. For it was requisit to handle those foure points generally, before he did descend vnto the faith of the Gospel.

As it were more superstitious. The Grecians doe oftentimes take *deisdaimoniā* in good part: notwithstanding it doth sometimes signifie immoderate fear, wherwith superstitious men do carefully torment themselves, whiles that they forge to themselves vain douts. And this seemeth to be the meaning of this place, that the men of Athens passe all measure in worshipping god, or that they do not perceiue what maner work moderation should be: as if he shoulde say, that they deale very vndiscretly in that they weare themselves in going by waies, thus muche touching the wordes: now to the matter. He proueth by this one reason that all the worshippings of the men of Athens are corrupt: because they be vncertaine what gods they ought to worship, because they take in hande rashlie and vnadvisedly diuers rites, and that without measure. For in that they had set vp an altar to the vnknewen God, it was a token that they knew no certainty, they had in deed a great cōpany of gods wherof they spake much: but when as they mixe them with vnknewen gods, they confesse by this that they know nothing of the true diuinitie. Furthermore, whosoever doth worship god without any certaintie, he worshippeth his owne inuentions in steed of God. Howsoever credulous men do flatter themselves: yet neither doth god allow any religion without knowledge and truth, neither ought it to bee counted holy and lawfull. Yea how proud soever they be, yet because they doubt in their consciences, they must needs be conuict by their own iudgement. For superstition is alwaies fearful, & doth euer now & then coyne some new thing, therefore we see how miserable their cōditiō is, who haue not the certain

light of the truth, because they do both alwayes dout in themselves, and loose their labour before God. Notwithstanding we must note that the vnbeleeuers whiles that they sometimes make themselves blinde thorough voluntary stubbornnes, & are sometimes amid diuers and manifold doubts, stroue & fight with themselves: oftentimes they do not only flatter themselves; but if any man dare mutter against their folly, they rage cruelly against him: the diuell doeth so bewitch them, that they thinke nothing to be better, than that which pleaseth them. Neuerthelesse if ther arise any doubt, if any seducer put vp his head, if any newe folly begin to appeare, they do not only wauer being in dout, but also of their own accord offer themselves to be carried hither and thither. Whereby it appeareth that neither in iudgement, neither in quiet state of minde, they stay and rest in the common custome of worshipping God: but that they droup like drunken men. But carefulnes & doubtfulnes which doeth not suffer the vnbeleeuers to flatter and please themselves, is better then such amasednes. Finally thogh superstition bee not alwaies feareful: yet for asmuch as it is inwrapt in diuers errors, it disquieteth mens minds, & doth prick them with diuers blind torments. This was the cause that the men of Attiēns did mixe their domesti call Gods (whom they thought they knew because in their vaine opinion they had inuented them) with vnknown gods. For thereby appeareth their vnquietnesse, because they confesse that they haue not as yet done as they ought, when they haue done sacrifice to the familiar Gods, which they had receiued of their fathers, & whō they called their country gods. Therefore to the end Paul may pluck out of their minds all vain & false persuasiōs, hee taketh this *maxime*, that they know not what they worshippe; neither haue they any certain diuine power. For if they had known any god at al, being cōtent with him, they wold neuer haue faine away vnto vnknown gods, forasmuch as the knowldege of the true God alone is sufficient for the abolishing of all idōls.

23 *To the unknown god.* I can wel graunt that this altar was dedicated to all strange gods: yet I canot yeelde to that which Ierome saith, that Paul did by a certain holy wilines attribute that to one God which was writtē of many. For seeing the superscriptiō was cōmō in euery mans mouth, ther was no place for subtiltie: why did he then chāge the plural nūber: surely, not that he might deceiue the men of Athens: but because the matter did so require, he said, that he brought doctrin cōcerning an vnknown god. And after he hath shewed that they are deceived, because they knew not what god they ought to worship, & had no certain Godhead in a great heap of gods: he doth now insinuat himself, & doth purchase fauor for his doctrine: because it was an vnjust thing to reiect that which was vttered cōcerning a new god, to whō they had already giuen ouer themselves: & it was far better first to know him, then rashly to worship him whō they knew not. Thus doth Paul return again to that principle, that god canot be worshipped rightly, vnlesse he be first made known. But here may a question be moued: How he saith that god was worshipped at Athens, who doth refuse al worshippings which are not agreeable

able to the prescript of his law: yea he pronounceth that al that is idolatrie, which men inuent without his woorde? If God allow no woorship, but that which is agreeable to his woorde, howe doth Paule giue this praise to men, who did dote without measure, that they woorshipped God? For Christ in condemning the Samaritanes is content with this one principle in that they woorshippe GOD without knowledge: and yet they did boast that they woorshipped the God of Abraham. Then what shall we say of the men of Athens, who hauing buried and quite put out the remembrance of the true God, had put in place of him Iupiter, Mercurie, Pallas and all that filthie rable? I answer: that Paul doth not in this place commend that which the men of Athens had done: but taketh from their affection though it were corrupt, free matter for teaching.

Ioh 4.22

24 *God who hath made the world.* Paul his drift is to teach, what God is. Furthermore because he hath to deale with prophane men, he draweth proofes from nature it selfe: for in vaine should he haue cited testimonies of Scripture. I said that this was the holy mans purpose to bring the men of Athens vnto the true God. For they were perswaded that there was some diuinity: only their preposterous religion was to be reformed. Whence we gather that the worlde doeth goe astray through bending crooks & boughts, yea that it is in a meere labyrinth, so long as there remaineth a confused opinion concerning the nature of God. For this is the true rule of godlines, distinctly & plainly to know who that God who we worship, is. If any man wil intreat generally of religion, this must be the first point, that there is some diuine power or godhead which men ought to worship. But because that was out of question, Paule descendeth vnto the second point, that The true God must be distinguished from all yaine inuentions. So that he beginneth with the definition of God, that he may thence proue how he ought to be worshipped: because the one dependeth vpon the other. For whence came so many false worshippings, and such rashnes to increase the same often times, saue onely because al men forged to themselues a God at their pleasure? And nothing is more easie then to corrupt the pure worship of God, when men esteeme God after their sense and wit. Wherefore there is nothing more fit to destroy all corrupt worshippings, then to make this beginning and to shew, of what sort the nature of God is. Also our Sauour Christ reasoneth thus. Ioh. 4. God is a spirit. Therefore he alloweth no other worshippers, but such as worship him spiritually. And surely he doth not subtilly dispute of the secret substance of God: but by his works he declareth, which is the profitable knowledge of him. And what doth Paul gather thence, because God is the creator, framer and Lord of the world? to witte, that he dwelleth not in temples made with hands. For seeing that it appeareth plainly by the creation of the worlde, that the righteousness, wisdom, goodnes and power of God, doth reach beyonde the bounds of heauen and earth: it followeth that he can be included and shut vp within no space of place.

Ioh. 4.24

Notwithstanding this demonstration seemeth to haue been in vayne, because

because they might readily haue saide, that images and pictures were placed in temples to testifie gods presence: and that none was so grosse but that hee knewe that GOD did fulfill all thinges. I aunswaere that that is true which I said a little before, that idolatric is contrary to it selfe. The vnbeleeuers said that they worshipped the gods before their images: but vnlesse they had tyed the godhead and power of God to Images, & had hoped to be holpen thereby, woulde they haue directed their prayers thither? Hereby it came also to passe that one temple was more holie then another. They ran to Delphos that they might fet the oracles of Apollo thence: Minerua had her seate and mansion at Athés. Now we see that Paul doth touch that false opinion, whereby men haue alwaies bin deceiued: because they feined to themselues a carnall God. This is the first entrance into the true knowledge of god, if we go without our selues, & do not measure him by the capacitie of our minde. Yea if we imagin nothing of him according to the vnderstanding of our flesh, but place him about the world, & distinguish him from creatures. From which sobriety the whole world was alwaies far: because this wickednes is in men naturally to deform Gods glory with their inuentions. For as they be carnall & earthie, they will haue one that shal be aunswerable to their nature. Secondly after their boldnesse they fashion him so as they may comprehend him. By such inuentions is the sincere & playn knowledge of God corrupt: yea his trueth as saith Paule is turned into a lye. For who soeuer doth not ascend high about the world, he apprehendeth vain shadowes & ghosts instead of God. Again vnles we be carried vp into heauen with the wings offaith, we must needs vanish away in our owne cogitations. And no maruel if the gentiles were so grossly deluded and deceiued, to include God in the elements of the worlde, after that they had pulled him out of his heauenly throne: seing that the same befel the Iewes, to whom notwithstanding the Lord had shewed his spiritual glory. For it is not without cause that Isaias doth chide the for including God within the walles of the temple. And we gather out of Steues his sermon, that this vice was common to al ages, which sermon is sette down by Luke in the 7. chapter. If any man asked the Iewes whose grossnes the holy ghost reprocueth, if they thought that God was included in their temple: they would stoutly haue denied that they were in anie such grosse error. But because they did onely beholde the Temple and did rise no higher in their mindes, & trusting to the temple, did boast that God was as it were bound to them: the spirit doth for good causes reprehend them, for tying him to the temple as if he were a mortal ma. For that is true which I saide euen now, that superstition is contrary to it selfe, and that it doth vanish away into diuers imaginations. Neither haue the papists at this day any defence sauing that wherewith the gentiles went about in times past to paint or couer their errors after a sort. In summe, superstition doth feigne that God dwellerh in temples made with hands, not that it wil shut him yp as it were in a prison: but because it doth dreame of a carnal or fleshly God, and doth attribute a certayne power to idols; & doth translate the glory of God vnto externall shewes.

But if God doe not dwell in Temples made with hands : why doth he testifie in so many places of Scripture, that he sitteth between the Cherubines, and that the Temple is his eternall rest? I answer, As he was not tyed to any place, so he meant nothing lesse than to tye his people to earthly signes, but rather he commeth downe to them that he might lift them vp vnto himselfe. Therefore those men did wickedly abuse the Temple and the arke, who did so behold those things that they staied stil vpon earth, and did depart from the spirituall worship of God. Hereby we see that there was great difference betweene those tokens of Gods presense which men inuented to themselues vnaduisedly, & those which were ordained by God: because men do alwaies incline downward, that they may lay hold vpon God after a carnall manner: but God by the leading of his word doth lift them vpward. Onely he vseth midle signes and tokens, whereby he doth insinuate himselfe with slowe men, vntill they may ascend into heauen by degrees and steps.

2. Reg. 19.
15.
Psal. 80. 2.
Psal. 132.
14.

25 *Neither is he worshipped with mans hands.* The same question which was answered of late concerning the temple, may now be objected touching ceremonies. For it seemeth that that may be translated vnto the worshippings of the lawe of Moses, which Paul condemneth in the ceremonies of the Gentiles. But we may readily answere that the faithfull did neuer properly place the worship of God in ceremonies: but they did only count them helpes wherewith they might exercise themselues according to their infirmities. When they did slea beasts, offred bread and drinke offererings, light torches and other lights, they knew that godlinesse was not placed in these things, but being holpen by these, they did alwaies looke vnto the spirituall worship of God, and they made account of it alone. And God himselfe saith plainly in many places that he doth not passe for any externall or visible thing, that ceremonies are of themselues of no importaunce, and that hee is worshipped no other wise but by faith, a pure conscience, by prayer and thankesfulnesse. What did the Gentiles then? To wit, when they erected images, they offered incense, they set forth plaies, and laid their couchins before their idols, they thought they had fulfilled the offices of godlinesse excellent well. Not only the philosophers, but also the poets doe sometimes deride the follie of the comon people, because they did disorderedly place the worship of God in the pompe and gorgeousnes of ceremonies. That I may omit infinite testimonies, that of Persius is wel knowne,

*Tell me yee Priests to sacred rites, what profite golde doth bringe
The same which Venus puppetts fine, Certes no other thing.
Why giue not we to Gods, that which the bleare cyde issue could,
Of great Messala neuer giue, from out their dish of gold?
Right iustly deemde a conscience cleere, and heavenly thoughts of minde,
A breast with mildnes such adorne, as vertue hath assingde.*

*Let me in temples offer these,
Then sacrifice the Gods shal please.*

And vndonbtedly the Lord caused profane men to vtter such speeches, that they might take away all colour of ignorance. But it doth plainly appeare that those who spake thus, did straightway slide back again vnto cōmon madnes: yea that they did neuer throughly vnderstand what this meant. For though those who passe the common people in wit, be enforced to confesse that bare ceremonies are in no estimation: yet it is vnpossible to pull from them this persuasiō, but that they will think that they be a part of the diuine worship. Therefore the more diligently they giue themselves to such vanities, they doe not doubt but that they doe the duties of godlinesse wel. Therefore, because all mortall men from the highest to the lowest do thinke that GOD is pacified with externall thngs, and they will with their owne workes fulfill their ducie towards him, that doth Paul refute. There is also a reason added, because seeing he is Lord of heauen and earth, he needeth nothing: because seeing that hee giueth breath and life, to men, hee can receiue nothing of them againe. For what can they bring of their owne, who being destitute of all good things, haue nothing but of his free goodnes? yea who are nothing but by his meere grace: who shal forthwith be brought to nought, if he withdraw the Spirit whereby they liue. Whereuppon it followeth that they are not onely dull but too proude if they thrust in themselves to worship God with the workes of their owne hands. For whereas hee saith that almes and the duties of loue are sweete smelling sacrifices, that must be distinguished frō the matter which wee haue now in hand, where Paul doth only intreat of the ceremonies, which the vnbeleeuers put in place of the spirituall worship of God. By life and breath is meant the life which men liue so long as the soule and body are ioyned together. Touching the end of the sentence though some Greeke bookes agree in this reading, *cetera panta* Through all things: yet that seemeth to me more agreeable which the old interpreter hath, *cetera panta*, And all things: because it is both plainer, and doth also containe a more perfect and full doctrin. For thence we do better gather that men haue nothing of their owne. And also certaine Greeke coppies agree thereto.

- 26 And hath made of one blood all mankind, to dwell vppon all the face of the earth, and hath appointed the times before determined, and the bounds of their habitation.
- 27 That they might seeke God if peradventure they maye grōpe him and finde him: though he be not farre from euery one of vs.
- 28 For in him we liue, moue, and haue our being: as certaine of your Poets said. For we be also his generation.
- 29 Therefore seeing we bee the generation of God, we must not thinke that the Godhead is like to golde, or silver, or to stone grauen by the cunning cogitation of man.

26 And he hath made of one blood. Paul doth now shew vnto the men of Athens to what end mankind was created, that he may by this meanes inuite and exhort them to consider the end of their life. This is surely filthy

filthy vnthankfulnes of men, seeing they all inioy the common life, not to consider to what end God hath giuen them life. And yet this beastly blockishnes doth possesse the more part, so that they doe not consider to what end they be placed in the world, neither doe they remember the creator of heauen and earth, whose good things they doe deuour. Therefore after that Paul hath intreated of the nature of God, he putteth in this admonition in due season, that men must be very carefull to knowe God: because they be created for the same end, and borne for that purpose. For he doth briefly assigne vnto them this cause of life, to seeke God. Againe for as much as there was not one kinde of religion only in the world, but the gentiles were distract into diuers sectes, he telleth them that this varietie came from corruption. For to this end in my iudgement, tendeth that, when hee saith, that all were created of one blood. For consanguinitie & the same originall ought to haue bin a bōd of mutual consent among thē. But it is religion which doth most of all ioyne men together, or cause them to fly one anothers companie: wherevpon it followeth, that they be reuolted from nature, who disagree so much in religiō & the worship of god. Bicause whersoeuer they be born, & whatsoeuer place of the world they inhabite, they haue al one maker and father, who must be sought of al men with one consent. And surely neither distaunce of places, nor boundes of countries, nor diuersitie of manners, neither any cause of separation among men doeth make God vnlike to himselfe. In summe, he meant to teach that the order of nature was broken, when as religion was pulled in peeces among them: & that that diuersitie which is among them, is a testimonie that godlinesse is quite ouerthrowen: because they are fallen away from God the father of al, vpon whom al kinred dependeth.

To dwell vpon the face of the earth. Luke doth briefly gather as hee vseth to doe, the summe of Paul his sermon. And it is not to be doubted, but that Paul did first shew that men are set here as vpon a Theatre, to beholde the woorkes of God, and secondly, that he spake of the prouidēce of God, which doth shew forth it selfe in the whole gouernment of the world. For whē he saith that god appointeth the times ordained before, and the bounds of mens habitations, his meaning is, that this worlde is gouerned by his hand and counsel, and that mens affaires fall not out by chaunce, as profane men dreame. And so we gather out of a fewe words of Luke, that Paul did handle most weighty matters. For whē he saith that the times were ordained before by him: he doth testifie that he had determined before men were created, what their condition and estate should be. When we see diuers changes in the world, when we see realmes come to ruine, lands altered, cities destroyed, nations laid wast, we foolishly imagine, that either fate or fortune beareth the swinge in these matters. But God doth testifie in this place by the mouth of Paul, that it was appointed before in his counsel, how long he would haue the state of euery people to continue, and within what boundes he would haue them contained. But and if he haue appointed thē a certain time, and appointed the bounds of countries, vndoubtedly he hath also set in order

Psal. 115. 3.

order the whole course of their life. And we must note that Paul doeth attribute to God not onely a bare foreknowledge and colde speculation, as some men doe vndiscretely: but he placeth the cause of those things which fall out in his counsel and becke. For he saith not that the times were onely foreseen, but that they were appointed and set in such order as pleased him best. And when he addeth also that God had appointed from the beginning those things which he had ordayned before, his meaning is, that he executeth by the power of his spirit, those things which he hath decreed in his counsell, according to that: Our God is in heauen, he hath done whatsoeuer he would. Now we see, as in a campe euery troupe and bande hath his appointed place, so men are placed vpon earth, that euery people may be content with their bounds, & that among these people euery particular person may haue his mansion. But though ambition haue oftentimes raged, and many beyng incensed with wicked lust, haue past their boundes: yet the lust of men hath neuer brought to passe, but that God hath gouerned al euents from out his holie sanctuarie. For though men by raging vppon earth doe seeme to assault heauen, that they may ouerthrow Gods providence: yet they are inforced whether they will or no, rather to establish the same. Therefore let vs know that the world is so turned over through diuers tumults that God doth at length bring al things vnto the end which he hath appointed.

27 *That they might seeke God.* This sentence hath two members: to wit, that it is mans ducie to seeke God: Secondly, that God himself cometh forth to meet vs, and doth shew himself by such manifest tokens, that we can haue no excuse for our ignorance. Therefore let vs remeber that those men doe wickedly abuse this life, & that they be vnworthy to dwel vpon earth, which doe not apply their studies to seeke him. As if euery kinde of brute beastes should fall from that inclination which they haue naturally, which should for good causes be called monstrous. And surely nothing is more absurd, then that men shuld be ignorant of their Authour, who are indued with vnderstanding principallie for this vse. And we must especially note the goodnesse of God, in that he doth so familiarly insinuate himselfe, that euen the blinde maye grope, after him. For which cause the blindnesse of menne is more shamefull and vntollerable, who in so manifest and euident a manifestation, are touched with no feeling of Gods presence. Whither soeuer they cast their eyes vppward or downward, they must needs light vppon liuely and also infinite images of Gods power, wisdom, and goodnesse. For God hath not darkly shadowed his glory in the creation of the worlde: but he hath euery where ingrauen such manifest marks, that euen blind men may knowe them by groping. Whence wee gather that men are not onely blind, but blockish when being holpen by such excellent testimonies they profit nothing. Yet here ariseth a question, whether men can naturally come vnto the true and merciful knowledge of GOD. For Paul doth giue vs to vnderstande, that their owne sluggishnes is the cause that they cannot perceiue that God is present: because though they

the shut their eies, yet may they grope after him. I answere that their ignorance and blockishnesse is mixed with such frowardnes, that being void of right iudgement, they passe ouer without vnderstanding al such signes of Gods glory as appeare manifestly both in heauen and earth. Yea seing that the true knowledge of god is a singular gift of his: & faith (by which alone he is rightly knowne) commeth onely from the illumination of the Spirit: it followeth that our minds cannot pearce so farre hauing nature onely for our guide. Neither doeth Paule intreat in this place of the habilitie of men: but he doth onely shew that they be without excuse, when as they be so blinde in such cleare light, as he saith in the first Chapter to the Romans. Therefore though mens senses faile thē in seeking out God, yet haue they no cloake for their fault, because though he offer himselfe to be handled and groped, they continue notwithstanding in a quandarie: Concerning which thing we haue spoken more in the fouerteenth Chapter.

Rom. 1. 20.
Cap. 14. 17

Though he be not farre from every one of vs. To the end he may the more touch the frowardnesse of men, hee saith that God is not to bee sought through many crookes, neither need we make any long iourney to find him: because euery mā shal find him in himself, if so be it he wil take any heed. By which experience we are conuict that our dulnesse is not without fault, which we had from the fault of Adam. For though no corner of the world be void of the testimonie of gods glory: yet wee need not goe without our selues, to lay hold vpon him. For hee doth affect and moue euery one of vs inwardly with his power in such sort, that our blockishnesse is like to a monster, in that in feeling him we feeble him not. In this respect certain of the Philosophers called man *the little worlde*: bicause he is aboue all other creatures a token of gods glory, replenished with infinite myracles.

28. *For in him.* I graunt that the Apostles according to the Hebrew phrase do oftentimes take this preposition *in*, for *per*, or by or through: but because this speech, that wee liue in God, hath greater force, and doth expresse more: I thought I would not change it. For I do not doubt but that Paul his meaning is that we bee after a sort contained in God, because he dwelleth in vs by his power. And therefore God himself doth separate him selfe from all creatures by this word *Iehouah*, that we may knowe that in speaking properly he is alone: and that we haue our being in him, in as much as by his spirit he keepeth vs in life and vpholdeth vs. For the power of the spirite, is spread abroade throughout all partes of the world, that it may preserue them in their state: that hee may minister vnto the heauen and earth that force and vigour, which wee see, and motion to all liuing creatures. Not as brainicke menne doe trifle, that all things are full of Gods, yea that stones are Gods: but because GOD doth by the woonderfull power and inspiration of his spirite, preserue those thinges which hee hath created of nothing. But mention is made in this place properly of menne, because Paule sayde, that they needed not to seeke GOD farre, whom they haue within them.

Further-

Furthermore forasmuch as the life of man is more excellent than motion, and motion doth excell essence: Paul putteth that in the highest place which was the chiefest, that he might goe downe by steps vnto essence or Being, thus, We haue not onely no life but in God, but not so much as mouing: yea no being, which is inferiour to both. I say that life hath the preheminance in men: because they haue not onely sense and motion as brute beasts haue, but they be indued with reason and vnderstanding. Wherefore the Scripture doth for good causes giue that singular gift which God hath giuen vs, a title & commendation by it selfe. So in Iohn when mention is made of the creation of all things, it is added apart not without cause, that life was the light of men. Now we see that all those who know not God, know not themselues: because they haue God present with them not onely in the excellent giftes of the minde, but in their verie essence: because it belongeth to God alone to Be, all other things haue their being in him. Also we learne out of this place that God did not so create the world once, that he did afterward depart from his worke: but that it standeth by his power, and that the same God is the gouernour therof who was the Creator. We must well think vpon this continuall comforting and strengthening, that we may remember God euery minute.

Iohn 1.4.

Certain of your Poets. He citeth half a verse out of Aratus, not so much for authorities sake, as that he may make the men of Athens ashamed: for such sayings of the Poets came from no other fountaine saue onely from nature and common reason. Neither is it any maruell if Paul who spake vnto men who were infidels and ignorant of true godlinesse, doe vse the testimonie of a Poet, wherein was extant a confession of that knowledge which is naturally ingrauen in mens mindes. The Papistes take another course, for they so leaue to the testimonies of men, that they set them against the oracles of God: and they doe not only make Ierome, or Ambrose, & the residue of the holy fathers, masters of faith: but they wil no lesse tie vs to the stinking answeres of their Popes, the if God himself should speake. Yea that which more is, they haue not been afraid to giue so great authoritie to Aristotle, that the Apostles & prophetes were silent in their schooles rather then he. Now that I may returne vnto this sentence, which I haue in hande, it is not to be doubted, but that Aratus spake of Iupiter: neither doth Paul, in applying that vnto the true God, which he spake vnskilfully of his Iupiter, wrest it vnto a contrary sense. For because men haue naturally some perseuerance of god, they draw true principles from that fountain. And though so soone as they begin to thinke vppon GOD, they vanishe away in wicked inuentions: and so the pure seed doth degenerate into corruptions: yet the first generall knowledge of god doth neuer theles remaine stil in them. After this sort no man of a sound mind can doubt to applie that vnto the true god, which we read in Virgil touching the feigned and false Ioue, that *All things are full of Ioue*. Yea when Virgil meant to expresse the power of GOD, through errour hee put in a wrong name. As touching the meaning of the wordes, it may be that

Aratus

Aratus did imagine that there was some parcell of the diuinitie in mens mindes, as the Manichees did say, that the soules of men are of the nature of God. So when Virgil saith concerning the worlde, *The spirit doth nourish within, and the minde beeing dispersed through all the ioynts, doth moue your whole huge weight.* He doth rather play the philosopher and subtilly dispute after the manner of Plato, then purely meane, that the worlde is supported by the secrete inspiration of God. But this inuention ought not to haue hindered, Paule from retayning a true maxime, though it were corrupt with mens fables, that men are the generation of God, because by the excellencie of nature they resemble some diuine thing: this is that which the scripture teacheth that wee are created after the Image and similitude of GOD. The same scripture teacheth also in many places, that we be made the sonnes of God by faith and free adoption, when wee are ingrafted into the bodye of Christ, and beeing regenerate by the spirit, wee beginne to be new creatures. But as it giueth the same spirit diuers names because of his manifold graces: so no maruell if the worde, Sonnes be diuerslie taken. All mortall menne are called Sonnes in generall, because they drawe neere to God in minde and vnderstanding: but because the Image of God is almost blotted out in them, so that there appeare scarce anie slenderlineffe: this name is by good right restrayned vnto the faithfull, who hauing the spirit of adoption giuen them, resemble their heavenly father in the light of reason, in righteousness and holinesse.

Gen. 1. 27.
Gal. 3. 26.

29 *Therefore seeing that.* He gathereth that God cannot be figured, or resembled by any grauen image: for as much as he would haue his image extant in vs. For the soule wherein the image of GOD is properly ingrauen, cannot be painted: Therefore it is a thing more absurd to goe about to paint God. Nowe we see what great iniurie they doe to GOD, which giue him a bodily shape: when as mans soule which doeth scarce resemble a small sparkle of the infinite glorie of God, cannot be expressed in any bodily shape.

Furthermore, for as much as it is certayne that Paul doth in this place inueigh against the common superstition of all the gentiles, because they would worshippe God vnder bodily shapes: we must holde this generall doctrine, that God is falsly and wickedly transfigured, and that his trueth is turned into a lie, so often as his maiestie is represented by any visible shape: as the same Paul teacheth in the first chapter to the Romaines. And though the Idolaters of all times wanted not their cloakes and colours: yet that was not without cause alwayes objected to them by the Prophetes, which Paul doth now object, that God is made like to wood or stone, or golde, when there is any image made to him of dead and corruptible matter. The Gentiles vsed images that according to their rudenesse, they might better conceiue that God was nigh vnto them. But seeing that God doth farre surpass the capacite of our minde, whosoever attempteth with his minde to comprehend him, he deformeth and disfigureth his glorie with a wic-

Rom. 1. 23.

ked and false imagination. Wherefore it is wickednesse to imagine any thing of him according to our owne sense. Again, that which worse is, it appeareth plainly, that men erect pictures and images to God for no other cause, saue onely because they conceiue some carnall thing of him: wherein he is blasphemed. The Papistes also are at this day no whit more excusable. For what colours soeuer they inuent to paint and colour those images, wherby they goe about to expresse GOD, yet because they be inwrapped in the same errour, wherein the menne of olde time were intangled, they bee vrged with the testimonies of the prophetes. And that the Heathen did vse the same excuses in tymes past, wherewith the papistes goe about to couer them selues at this daye, it is well knowne out of their owne bookes. Therefore the prophetes, doe not escape the mockes of certayne, as if they layd too great grossenesse to their charge, yea burthen them with false accusations: but when all things are well weighed, those who will iudge rightly shall finde, that whatsoeuer starting hoales, euen the most witty menne haue sought, yet were they taken with this madnesse, that God is wel pleased with the sacrifice done before images. Whereas we with Erasmus translate it *Nymen*, Luke putteth *Theion* in the neuter gender for diuinitie or godhead. When Paule denieth, that GOD is like to golde or siluer, or stone; and addeth afterwarde Grauen by cunning or inuention of man, he excludeth both matter and forme, and doeth also condemne al inuentions of men, which disfigure the true nature of God.

30 *And though God haue winked at the times of this ignorance hitherto; hee willeth al men euery where to repent now.*

31 *Because he hath appointed a day, wherein he wil iudge the world in righteousness, by that mā whom he hath appointed, hauing fulfilled his promise to al men, when he raised him vp from the dead,*

32 *And when they had heard the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: & other some said, we wil heare thee of this againe.*

33 *So Paul went out from among them: yet certain ioyning themselves to him beleued: among whom was both Dionisius, Arcopagita, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*

30 *And the times of this ignorance.* Because that is commonly thought to be good, which hath bene vsed of long time, and is approued by the common consent of all men: it might haue been obiected to Paul, why doest thou disanul those things which haue been receiued, & vsed continually since the beginning of the world? & who canst thou persuaide that the whole world hath bin deceiued so long? as there is no kind of abomination so filthy, which the papistes doe not thinke to be wel fortified with this buckler. Paul preuenteth this question: shewing that menne went astray so long therefore, because God did not reach out his hande from heauen, that hee might bring them backe againe into the waye. It may seeme an inconuenient thing, that menne indued with reason
and

and iudgement should erre so grossely & filthily in a most weightie matter. But Paul his meaning is that men do neuer make an ende of erring, vntill God do helpe them. And now he assigneth no other cause why he did not redresse this any sooner, saue onely his good pleasure. And assuredly we be not able to comprehend the reason why god did at a sodaine set vp the light of his doctrine, when he suffered men to walke in darkenes fower thousand yeeres: at least seing the scripture doth conceale it, let vs heere make more account of sobrietie, than of preposterous wisdom. For they goe about to bring God within bounds: which is a most vnseemely thing and contrary to nature her self, whosoeuer they be that will not suffer him to speake or holde his peace at his pleasure. Againe those that will not bee content with his wisdom and secreat counsell, must needs murmure against Paul, who teacheth manifestly that ignorance did reigne in the world so long as it pleased God to winke at it. Other some interpret it otherwise, that God did spare ignorance, as if he did winke, being vnwilling to punish it: but that surmise is altogether contrarie to Paul his meaning and purpose: who meant not to lessen mans fault, but to magnifie the grace of God which did appeare at a sodaine, and it is proued to bee false out of other places: because those who haue sinned without Lawe, shall notwithstanding perish without Lawe. In summe, Paul his wordes carrie with them this meaning onely, that men were set vppon blindness, vntill God did reueale himselfe vnto them: and that we ought not too curiously and boldly to demande and require the cause why hee put away darkness no sooner: but that whatsoeuer pleased him ought to seem to vs right and equall without making any more adoe. For though this bee a hard speech that men were miserablie deceiued long time, whiles that God made as though he sawe it not: yet must we bee content with, and stay our selues vpon his providence. And if at any time there come vppon vs a vaine and peruerse desire to know more than is meete for vs, let vs streightway call to minde that which Paul teacheth in manie places, that, It was a mysterie hid since the beginning of the worlde, in that the light of the Gospel did appeare to the Gentiles at a sodaine: and that this is a token of the manifold wisdom of God, which swalloweth vp all the senses of men. Againe let vs remember that it doeth not lessen the fault of men, because God would not heale their errorres: forasmuch as their owne conscience shall alwayes holde them conuict, that they cannot escape iust damnation. And Paul (not that he might lay the fault and blame vppon God, but that hee might cut off occasion of curious and hurtfull questions) saide that the worlde did erre whiles God did winke. And hereby wee learne howe reuerently wee ought to thinke of Gods providence: least any man shoulde bee so bolde, as mans nature is proude, to demaunde a reason of God of his workes. Furthermore this admonition is no lesse profitable for vs, than for the men of that time. The enimies of the Gospel when it beginneth to spring againe, count it a great absurditie that God did suffer men to go astray so long vnder the apostacie of the Pope: as if (though there appeare no reason)

Rom. 2.12.

Rom. 16.25.
Ephes. 3.9.

it were not as lawfull for him nowe to winke at mens ignorance, as in times past. And we must principally note to what end he saith this, to wit, that the ignorance of former time may not hinder vs from obeying God without delay, when he speaketh. Most men thinke that they haue a faire colour for their errour, so they haue their fathers to keepe them companie, or so they get some patronage or defense by long custom: yea they would willingly creepe out heere, that they may not obey the word of God. But Paul saith that we must not set an excuse from our fathers ignorance, when god speaketh vnto vs: because though they be not guiltlesse before God, yet our sluggishnes is more intollerable, if we be blind at noone day: and lie as deafe, or as if we were a sleepe, when the trumpet of the Gospel doth sound.

Now he willeth all men. In these wordes Paul teacheth that wee must giue eare to God so soone as he speaketh, as it is written; To day if yee will heare his voice harden not your hearts, For the stubbernes of those men is without excuse, who forslow this opportunitie when God doeth gently call them vnto him. Also we gather out of this place to what end the Gospel is preached: to wit, that God may gather vs to himself from the former errors of our life. Therefore so oft as the voice of the gospel doeth sounde in our eares, let vs know that God doeth exhort vs vnto repentance. We must also note that he attribureth to God the person of the speaker, though he do it by man. For otherwise the Gospel hath not so full authoritie as the heauenly truth deserueth, saue onely when our faith doth looke vnto him who is the gouernor of the propheticall function, and doth depend vpon his mouth.

Psal. 95. 7. 8.
Heb. 3. 7. 8.

31 *Because he hath appointed a day.* Hee maketh mention of the last iudgement that he may awake them out of their dreame. For we knowe how hard a matter it is for men to denie themselues. Therefore they must be violently enforced vnto repentance, which cannot be done better then when they be cited to appeare before gods iudgement seat, and that feareful iudgement is set before them, which they may neither despise nor escape. Therefore let vs remember that the doctrine of repentance doth than take place, when me who would naturally desire to flatter themselues, are awaked with feare of Gods iudgement, & that none are fit teachers of the gospell but those who are the criers or apparitors of the highest iudge, who bring those who are to come before the iudge, to plead their cause, & denounce the iudgment hanging ouer their heads, euen as if it were in their owne hand. Neither is this added in vaine in *righteousnes, or righteousnesslie*. For though all men in the word confesse that God is a iust iudge: yet we see howe they for the most part, pamper and flatter themselues: for they will not suffer God to demand an account farther than their knowledge and vnderstanding doth reach. Therefore Paul his meaning is that men do profit themselues nothing by vain flatterie: because they shal not prejudice gods iustice by this meanes, which sheweth that all that is an abomination before God which seemeth goodly in the sight of men: because hee will not followe the decrees of men, but that forme which himselfe hath appointed.

By the man who he hath appointed. It is not to be doubted but that Paule spake more largely concerning Christe, that the Athenienses might knowe that he is the sonne of God, by whom saluation was brought to the worlde, and who had all power giuen him in heauen and earth. Otherwise this speeche which we reade here, shoulde haue had but small force to perswade. But Luke thought it sufficient to gather the summe of the Sermon briefly. Yet is it to bee thought that Paule spake firste concerning the grace of Christ, and that he did first preach him to be the Redeemer of men, before he made him a iudge. But because Christ is oftentimes contemned, when he offereth himselfe to be a Redeemer: Paul denounceth that he will once sharply punish the such wicked contempt, because the whole world must be iudged by him. The woorde *orizein* may be referred, as well vnto the secrete counsel of God, as vnto externall manifestation. Yet because the former exposition is more common, I doe willingly imbrace the same, to wit, that God by his eternall decree, hath ordained his sonne to bee the iudge of the worlde: & that to the ende the reprobate who refuse to be ruled by Christ, may learne that they strue but in vaine against the decree of GOD which cannot be broken. But because nothing seemeth more strange to men, then that God shal iudge in the person of man, Paul addeth afterward, that this dignity of Christ, which were harde to bee beleueed, was approved by his resurrection.

The will of God alone ought to be so reuerenced among vs, that euery man for himselfe subscribe to his decrees without delay: because the cloke and colour of signoraunce vseth oftentimes to bee objected, therefore Paule saith plainly, that Christ was by his resurrection openly shewed to be the iudge of the worlde, and that that was reuealed to the eyes of men, which GOD had before determined with himselfe, concerning him. For that poynt of doctrine which Luke toucheth briefly in fewe wordes, was handeled by Paul at large. Hee saide not onely in a woorde that Christ rose from death: but hee did also intreate of the power of his resurrection, as was meete. For to what ende did Christe rise, but that he might bee the first fruite of those which rise againe? And to what ende shall wee rise againe, but either to life or death? Wherevpon it followeth, that Christe by his resurrection is declared and prooued to bee the Iudge of the worlde.

1. Cor. 15.
23.

32 *Some mocked.* By this we see how great the carelesnesse of men is whom neither the tribunall seate of God, nor the maiesty of the highest iudge doth make afraid. We haue said that this is a most sharp prick, wherewith mens mindes are pricked forward to feare GOD, when his iudgement is set before their eyes: but there is such vnspokeable hardnes in the contemners, that they are not afraid to count that a fable or lie, which is spoken concerning the giuing of an account of our life once.

Notwithstanding there is no cause why the ministers of the Gospell shoulde omit the preaching of the iudgement which is inioyned them. Though the wicked doe laugh and mocke: yet this doctrine which

they goe about to make of none effect shal so gird them, that they shall at length perceiue that they haue striven in vaine with their snare. And no maruel if this point of Paul his doctrine were derided at Athens. For it is a mystery hid from mens minds, wheron the chiefeſt Philoſophers did neuer thinke, neither can we otherwiſe comprehend it, then when we liſt vp the eies of faith vnto the infinite power of God. And yet Paul his ſermon was not altogether without fruite: becauſe there were ſome of the hearers which were deſirous to profit and go forward. For when they ſay that they wil heare him againe, their meaning is that though they were not as yet thoroughly perſuaded, yet had they ſonie taſt, which did prouoke them to be deſirous to profit. Surely this deſire was contrary to lothſomnes.

34 *Among whom was alſo Dionifius.* Seing that Luke doth name one man and one woman onely, it appeareth that there was but a ſmall number of thoſe which beleued at the firſt. For thoſe other of whom he maketh mention remained indifferent. Becauſe they did neither wholly deſpiſe Paul his doctrine: neither were they ſo thoroughly touched, that they ioyned them ſelues vnto him that they might be his ſchollers. Luke maketh mention of Dionifius about the reſt, becauſe hee was in no ſmall authoritie among his Citizens. Therefore it is likelie that Danaris waſ alſo a woman of ſome renowne.

Furthermore, it is ridiculous in that the papiſtes made of a Iudge, an Aſtrologer. But this is to be imputed partly to their ignorance, partly to their boldneſſe, who ſeeing, they knewe not what *Areopagus* or *Mars ſtreete* meant, tooke to themſelues libertie to feigne whatſoeuer they woulde. And their rudeneſſe is too groſſe, who aſcribe the bookes of the heauenly and eccleſiaſticall Hierarchie, and of the names of God, to this Dionyſius. For the heauenly Hierarchie is ſtuffed not onely with manie doltish and moonkiſh trifles, but alſo with many abſurd inuentions, and wicked ſpeculations. And the bookes of the Eccleſiaſticall Hierarchie, doe themſelues declare, that they were made many yeeres after: when as the puritie of chriſtianitie was corrupt with an huge heape of ceremonies. As for the Booke of the names of GOD, though it haue in it ſome thinges which are not altogether to be deſpiſed, yet it doth rather breath out ſubtilties, then ſounde godlineſſe.

CHAP. XVIII.

- 1 **A**fter this Paule departed from Athens, and came to Corinthus.
- 2 And hauing gotten a certaine Iewe called Aquila, borne in Pontus, who came lately from Italy, and Priscilla his wife (becauſe Claudius had commanded al Iewes to depart from Rome) he came vnto them.
- 3 And becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and wrought: and they were rent makers.
- 4 And he diſputed in the Synagogue euery Sabbath day, and perſuaded both Iewes and Greekes.

¶ And

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was forced in the Spirit, testifying to the Iewes that Iesus was Christ.

1 This historie is worthy to bee remembred euen for this one cause, because it containeth the first beginning of the Church of Corinthus, which, as it was famous for good causes, both bicause of the multitude of men, & also because of the excellent gifts bestowed vpon them, so there were in it grosse and shamefull vices. Furthermore Luke sheweth in this place with what great labor, and how hardly Paul did winne the same to Christ. It is well knowne what a rich Cittie Corinthus was by reason of the noble mart, how populous; how greatly giuen to pleasure. And the old prouerbe doth testifie that it was sumptuous and ful of riot: All men cannot goe to Corinthus. When Paul entreth the same, what hope I pray you can he conceiue? He is a simple man vnknowne, hauing no eloquence or pomp, shewing no wealth or power. In that that huge gulph doth not swallow vp his confidence and desire which he had to spreade abroad the Gospel, by this we gather that hee was furnished with wonderfull power of the Spirit of God: and also that God wrought by his hand after a heauenly inaner and not after any humane maner. Wherefore he boasteth not without cause that the Corinthians are the seale of his Apostleship. For they be wise blind, who doe not acknowledge that the glory of God did more plainly appeare in such a simple & base kind of dealing; and he himself shewed no smal token of inuincible constancie, when being vexed with the mockes of all men (as the proude did contemne him) he did notwithstanding stay himselfe vppon Gods helpe alone. But it is worth the labour to note all the circumstances, as Luke setteth downe the same in order.

1. Cor. 9. 2.

2 A Iew called Aquila. This was no small triall in that Paule findeth none at Corinthus to lodge him, saue Aquila who had bin twice exiled. For being borne in Pontus, he forsooke his countrie and sailed ouer the sea that he might dwell at Rome. Hee was compelled to depart thence againe by the commandement of Claudius Caesar. Though the commodiousnes of the Citie was such, the plentie so great, the situation so pleasant; and there were also so many Iewes there: yet Paul founde no more fit haost than a man that had bin banished out of his owne countrie and also out of another soile. If we compare the great fruite which ensued immediatly vpon his preaching, with such a base entrance, the power of the Spirit of God shall plainly appeare. Also we may see howe the Lord by his singular counsell turneth those things to his glorie and the saluation of the godly, which seeme contrary to the flesh, and unhappie. Nothing is more miserable than exile according to the sense of the flesh. But it was farre better for Aquila to be Paul his companion, than to be in the highest office either at Rome or in his countrie. Therefore this happie calamitie of Aquila doth teach vs, that the Lord doeth often better provide for vs, when he doeth sharply punish vs, than if he should most gently intreat vs: and when he tosseth vs to and fro in most extreme exile, that he may bring vs vnto the heauenly rest.

All Iewes to depart from Rome. The estate of that nation was then very miserable, so that it is a wonder that they did not almost all depart from the worship of God. But this is a greater wonder that the religion wherein they had bin brought vp preuailed against Cæsars tyranny, and that so soone as Christ the sunne of righteousness did arise, few were turned vnto him. Notwithstanding I do not doubt but that the Lord suffered the to passe through many troubles, that they might the more willingly, yea the more greedily receiue the grace of redemption offered them: but the more part became dull in their miserie, fewe did submit themselves to be taught when the Lord did punish them, as did Aquila and Priscilla. Yet if Suetonius say the truth, they were expelled through hatred of the name of Christ, and so calamitie might haue more prouoked and angred a great part because they were wrongfully accused for that religion which they did detest.

3 *They were of the same trade.* This place teacheth that Paul before he came to Corinthus was wont to worke with his hands: and that not vp, on pleasure, but that he might get his liuing with his handyworke. It is not knowne where hee first learned his occupation: notwithstanding it appeareth by his owne testimony that he wrought principally at Corinthus. And he sheweth a reason, because the false Apostles taught freely without taking any thing, that they might craftily creepe in, therefore the holy man would not giue place to them in that point, least he should cause the Gospel of Christ to be euill spoken off. But we may easily gather out of this place, that whithersoever he came,) vntill he was occupied in the continual labour of teaching) he wrought of his occupation, that he might get his liuing. When Chrysostome saith that Paul was a cordiner, he doth no whit dissent from Luke, because they were wont at that time to make tents of skinnes.

4 *He disputed in the synagogue.* It is a wonder how that crope in which is in the Latine bookes, that Paul put in the name of Christ: vnlesse it were because some reader would supply the want of the generall sentence. For Luke setteth downe two things in this place: to wit, that Paul disputed among the Iewes: secondly that he began more plainly to profess Christ after that Silas and Timotheus were come. And though it be likely that he began to speake of Christ euen at the first entrance, because he could not omit the principall point of the heauenly doctrine: yet that doeth not hinder but that he might vse some other manner of disputation. Therefore I take *pisheim*, that is to perswade, for to induce by litle and litle. For in my iudgement Luke doth signifie, that forasmuch as the Iewes did handle the Law coldly and foolishly, Paul spake of the corrupt & wicked nature of man, of the necessitie of grace, of the redeemer which was promised, of the means to obtain saluation, that he might awake them: for this is a fit and brieft preparation vnto Christ. Again he saith that he was forced in spirit to teach that Iesus was Christ, his meaning is, that he was inforced with greater vehemency, to intreat & speak of Christ freely & openly. So that we see that Paul did not vtter all things at one time: but he tempered his doctrine, as occasion did serue.

And

And because like moderation is profitable at this day, it is convenient for faithful teachers wisely to consider where to begin, least a preposterous and confused order do hinder the proceeding of doctrine. Furthermore though there were ferventness enough in Paul, yet is it no inconvenient thing that he was made more courageous by some new help: nor that hee was encouraged by shame or the hope which he reposed in his fellows, but because hee considered that this helpe was sent him, as it were from heaven. But this forcing in the Spirit is not taken for a violent or externall impulsion (as they say) as those which were called Phæbades and frantike men were wont to be carried away with diuellish madnesse: but there was more ferventness added vnto the wonted inspiration of the Spirit, which was in Paul, so that hee was moued with new power of God, and yet did he of his owne accord follow the Spirit as his guide. Whereas Paul did testify that Iesus is Christe, I expounde it thus: when he had thoroughly taught the Iewes concerning the office of the Redeemer, he declared by testimonies of scripture that this is hee which was to be hoped for: because all those things agree to him, which the law and the prophets attribute to Christ. Therefore he did not simply affirm, but vsing a solemne testification, he proued Iesus the sonne of Mary to be that Christ, who should be the mediator betweene God & men, that he might restore the worlde from destruction to life.

6 And when they gainesaid him, and railed vpon him, shaking his garments, hee said vnto them, Your blood be vpon your owne head, I will goe hencefoorth cleane vnto the Gentiles.

7 And going thence, he entred into the house of a certaine man named Iustus, a worshipper of God, whose house ioyned to the Synagogue.

8 And Crispus the chiefe ruler of the Synagogue beleened in the Lord with all his housholde: and manie of the Corinthians which heard, beleened, and were baptized.

9 And the Lord said by night by a vision to Paul, Feare not: but speake, & hold not thy peace.

10 Because I am wit thee, and no man shall lay hande on thee to hurt thee: because I haue much people in this citie.

11 And hee remained there a yere and sixe monethes, teaching them the worde of the Lorde.

6 When they gainesaid. The Iewes suffered Paul after a sort vntill he came vnto the manifest preaching of Christ. And heere brake out their rage. And we must note the speech: that they goe from gainesaying vnto blaspheming and railing. For it falleth out thus for the most part, when men take to themselves such libertie, that the diuell doth inflame them by little & little vnto greater madnesse. For which cause wee must take good heede, that no wicked lust or desire, prouoke vs to resist the truth: & aboue all let that horrible iudgement terrifie vs, which the Spirit of god thundereth out by the mouth of Paul against all rebels, For undoubtedly in that Paul by shaking his garments gaue some token of de-
testation

Ch. 13. 51.

testation, it was no humane or priuate indignation, but zeale kindled by God in his heart: yea God raised him vp to be a preacher & setter forth of his vengeance, to the end the enemies of the worde might know that they should not escape scotfree for their stubbornnesse. We spake somewhat touching this signe of execration or cursing in the 13. chapter. Let the Readers repair thither. The summe is, that God is sorer displeased with contempt of his word, then with any wickednesse. And surely men be quite past hope, when they tread vnder foote, or driue from them the only remedie of all euils and maladies. Now as the Lorde cannot abyde rebellio against his word, so it ought to sting & netle vs full sore. My meaning is this, that when the wicked enter combate with God, & as it were arme themselves to resist, we are called as it were by the heavenly trumpet, vnto the conflict: because there is nothing more filthy then that the wicked should mocke God to his face, whiles we say nothing, and that they should euen break out into reproches and blasphemies.

Eze. 3. 18.

Your blood. He denounceth to them vengeance: because they be without excuse. For they can shift no part of their fault from themselves after that despising the calling of God, they haue indeuoured to put out the light of life. Therefore seeing they beare the blame of their owne destruction, he doth also affirme that they shall be punished. And in saying that he is cleane, he testifieth that he hath done his dutie: it is wel known what the Lorde giueth all his ministers in charge in Ezechiel. If thou shew not vnto the wicked that hee may conuert, I will require his blood at thy hand. Therefore Paul (because hee did what hee coule to bring the Iewes to repentance) doth acquit himself of all guiltines. And by these wordes teachers are warned that vnlesse they will bee guiltie of blood before the Lorde, they must doe what in the lyeth to bring those which goe astray into the way, and that they suffer nothing to perish through ignorance.

I will go vnto the Gentiles. Though the Iewes had shewed themselves to be most readie to be taught, yet ought Paul to haue emploied himself to teach the Gentiles, whose apostle and minister he was made: but here he expresseth the passage whereby he withdrew himselfe from the stubborn Iewes, for all. For he obserued this course in teaching, that beginning with the Iewes, he might couple the Gentiles with them in the societie of faith: and so might make of both together one bodie of the church. When they remained no hope to do any good amōg the Iewes, then the Gentiles only remained. Therefore the sense is this, that they must be deprived of their own inheritance, that it may bee giuen to the Gentiles: and so be wounded, partly, that being strikē with feare, yea, being cast down, they might come to soundnes of minde: partly that the emulation or struing of the Gentiles might prick them forward vnto repentance. But because they were vncurable, reproche and shame serued for this purpose only to bring them into despaire.

7 Departing thence. Paul did not change his lodging, whiche hee had with Priscilla and Aquila, because hee was wearie of their company: but that he might more familiarly insinuate himselfe and come in fauour

fauour with the gentiles. For I suspect that this Iustus, of whom Luke maketh mention, was rather a gentile then a Iew. Neither doth the nighnes of the Synagogue any whit hinder: for the Iewes were scattered abroade, so that they had no certaine place of the Citie to dwell in. Yea it seemeth that Paule did make choyse of the house which did ioyne to the Synagogue, that hee might the more nettle the Iewes. The title and commendation ascribed to Iustus, confirmeth this opinion, for it is said that he was a worshipper of God. For though the Iewes had not sincere religion: yet because they did al professe the worship of God, it might haue seemed that godlines took place cōmonly in all the whole nation. But because it was a rare matter among the gentiles to worship God: if any drewe neere vnto true godlines, he hath this singuler testimonie giuen him, which is set against idolatrie. Also I thinke that the Corinthians, of whō Luke speaketh shortly after, were gentiles. Neuertheles least we should thinke that Paule his labour was altogether fruitlesse, which he bestowed among the Iewes, Luke reckoneth vp two of them which beleueed, Crispus and Sosthenes. Of whom Paul himselfe speaketh in the first Chapt. of the first Epist. to the Corinthians. For in his salutation he maketh Sosthenes his fellow in office: after that he saith that he baptized Crispus. I take it that he is called the Ruler of the Synagogue, not as if he alone did beare rule and had the gouernment, because Sosthenes hath the same title giuen him shortly after: but because he was one of the chiefe men.

1. Cor. 1. 14.

9 And the Lord said. Though the fruite of Pauls doctrine (in that he gained some daily to Christ) might haue encouraged him to go forward, yet is the heauenly Oracle added for his farther confirmation. Whence we gather that there were great cumbates set before him, and that hee was sore tossed diuers ways. For the Lord did neuer without cause powre out his oracles: neither was it an ordinary thing with Paule to haue visions: but the Lorde vsed this kinde of remedy, when necessitie did so require: and the thing it selfe doth shewe, that there laide vpon the holy man a great weight of businesse, vnder which he might not onely sweat, but almost faint, vnlesse he had been set on foot again & refreshed with some new help. And it is not without cause that hee saith that his comming was base & contemptible, & that he was conuersaunt there in fear & trembling. For mine owne part I think thus, that the wonderfull power of the Spirit wherewith Paul was indued before, was holpen with the oracle. Furthermore for as much as the Scripture distinguisheth visions from dreames as it appeareth by the twelfth chapter of the book of Numbers: Luke meaneth by this worde *vision*, that when Paul was in a traunce he saw a certaine shape or forme, whereby hee knewe that God was present with him. Assuredly it is not to be doubted but that God appeared by some signe.

1. Cor. 2. 3.
Numb. 12. 6

Feare not. This exhortation sheweth that Paule had cause of feare ministred vnto him: for it had been a superfluous thing to correct feare, or to will him not to feare when all was well & quiet: and especially in a man so willing and readie.

Fur-

Furthermore when the Lord (to the end he may haue his seruau^t to doe his duetic faithfullie and stoutlie) beginneth with restraining feare: by this we gather that nothing is more contrarie to the pure and free preaching of the gospel, then the straites of a faint heart. And surely experience doth shew that none are faithfull & couragious ministers of the word, whom this fault doth hinder: and that those onely are rightly prepared and addressed to teach, to whom it is graunted with boldnes and courage of heart to ouercome all manner danger. In which respect hee writeth to Timothie, that the spirite of feare is not giuen to the preachers of the Gospel; but of power, and loue, and sobrietie. Therefore we must note the connection of wordes, Feare not but speake, which is all one, as if he should haue said, Let not feare let thee to speake. And because feare doth not onely make vs altogether without tongue, but doth so binde vs that we cannot purely and freely speake that which is needful, Christ touched both briefly: Speake (saith he) and hold not thy peace: that is, speake not with halfe thy mouth, as it is in the common prouerbe. But in these words there is prescribed to the ministers of the worde of God a common rule that they expound and lay open plainly and without color or dissimulation, whatsoeuer the Lord wil haue made knowne to his Church: yea let them keepe backe nothing which may make for the edifying or increase of Gods Church.

1. Tim. 1. 7.

Psal. 23. 4.

Psal. 27. 3.

Mat. 28. 20

10 *Because I am.* This is the former reason why Paul hauing subdued feare, must manfully and stoutly do his duetic, because he hath God on his side. Whereto answereth the reioycing of Dauid, If I shall walke in the midst of the shadow of death I shall feare none ill: because thou art with me. Again, If tentes be pitched about me &c. The question is whether he did not perceiue that God was present with him elsewhere: as he had had experience of his helpe in diuerse places. For the promise is generall, I am with you vntil the ende of the world. Neither is it lawfull for vs to mistrust, so often as we obey his calling, but that he wil be present with vs. But it is an vsuall thing with the Lorde to apply that vnto certaine kinds, when the matter so requireth, which he hath promised to do in al affaires, & we know that when we come to the push, then are we most desirous of helpe. Moreouer, these two members are ioyned together, I am with thee, & no man shal hurt thee. For it falleth out sometimes that God doth helpe vs, and yet doth he, to looke too, suffer vs to be oppressed: as he forsook not Paul euen in the midst of death, & here he promiseth the peculiar defence of his hand, whereby he shall be preserved from the violence of his enemies. But the question is, whether Paul needed any such confirmation, who ought to haue been willing to enter all maner dangers. For what if he had been to suffer death: should he therefore haue fainted through feare? I answere, that if at any time God pronounce that his seruants shall be safe for a time, that doth no whit hinder, but that they may prepare themselves to suffer death valiantly: but as wee distinguish between profitable and necessarie: so wee must note that there be some promises, which if the faithfull want, they must needs faint and sink downe: and that other some are added when it is

it is expedient so to be, which though they be taken away (because the grace of God doth neuerthelesse remaine firme and sure) the faith of the godly doth not faile. After this sort Paul is commanded not to feare because his enemies shall not touch him, and if so be he should haue bin oppressed, euē then with their violence, yet wold he not haue bin afraid: but god wold haue his boldnesse and courage to encrease euen by this, because he should be without danger. If at any time the Lord bear with vs so farre forth, we are not to despise such a comfort of our infirmities, in the meane season let this be sufficient for vs to tread vnder foote all corrupt feare of the flesh: that so long as we fight vnder his banner, wee cannot be forsaken of him. And when it is said, No man shall gainstande thee to doe thee hurt, the Lorde doth not meane that he shall bee free from violence and tumult, whom the Iewes did afterwarde deadliely inuade: but his meaning is that their attempts shall bee frustrate: because the Lord had determined to deliuer him out of their handes. Therefore we must fight stoutly that we may win the field.

Because I haue much people. The second reason why he should take a good heart, is, because the Lord wil raise vp a great and populous church there; though it be to be doubted whether this member depend vpon that which goeth next before: for the text will run fitly thus, because the Lord determined by the hūd of Paul to gather together a great church, he wold not suffer the enemies to interrupt the course of his labors, as if he should haue said, I will helpe thee, that thou mayst not faile my people whose minister I haue appointed thee to bee: I doe willingly embrace this exposition, that diuers reasons are not inferred which are to be read apart: but that they be so distinguished that they agree together. Furthermore the Lord calleth those his people, who though they might then for good causes be counted strangers: yet because they were written in the book of life, and were forthwith to be admitted into his familie, they haue this title giuen them not vnproperly. For we know that many sheep wander without the flock for a time; as the sheep haue many wolues among them. Therefore, whom the Lord determined shortly after to gather to himself, those doth he take for his people in respect of their future faith. But let vs remember that those are ingrafted into the body of Christe, who appertaine vnto the same by the eternall adoption of God: as it is *John. 17. 6.* written, Thine they were, and thou gauest them mee.

¶ 11 He continued there a yeere. We do not read that Paul staid so long any where els saue there: and yet it appeareth by his two Epistles, that he was not only like to suffer much troubles: but that he had suffered manie vnjust and vnmeet things by reason of the pride and vnthankfulness of the people: so that we see that there was no part of warfare wherein the Lord did not wonderfully exercise him. Also we gather what a hard & laborous matter the edifying of the church is: seeing that the most excellent workmaster spent so much time about the laying of the foundation of this church only. Neither doth he boast that he had finished the work, but that the Lord had put others in his place, that they might build vpon his foundation: as he saith after ward, that he had planted, and that *1. Cor. 3. 6.* Apollo had watered.

12. Now when Gallio was deputie of Achaia, the Iewes rose with one accorde against Paul, and brought him before the iudgement seat,
 13. Saying, this man perswaderh men to worship god contrary to the law.
 14. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio saide vnto them, If it were any iniurie or wicked fact, O Iewes, I would according to reason maintaine you.

15. But if it be a question of words & names, & your law, looke ye to it your selues for I will be no iudge in these matters.

16. And he draue them from the iudgement seat.

17. And when all the Greekes had caught Sosthenes the ruler of the Synagogue, they smote him before the iudgement seat: neither did Gallio care for any of these things.

12. When Gallio. Either the change of the deputie did incourage the Iewes, to wax more proud and insolent: as froward men vse to abuse new things, that they may procure some tumult: or els hoping that the iudge would fauour them, they brake the peace and silence at a sodain, which had continued one whole yeere. And the summe of the accusation is, that Paul went about to bring in a false kind of worship, contrary to the law. Now the question is, whether they spake of the lawe of Moles, or of the rites vsed in the empire of Rome. Because this latter thing seemeth to me to be cold, I do rather receiue that, that they burdened Paul with this crime, that he brake & altered the worship prescribed in the law of God, & that to the end they might hit him in the teeth with noueltie or innouation. And surely Paul had bin worthy to haue bin condemned, if he had gon about any such thing: but forasmuch as it is most certain that they did trecherously & wickedly slander the holy mā, they indeuoured to couer an euill cause with an honest excuse. We know how straitly the Lord commandeth in the law, how he wil haue his seruants to worship him. Therefore to depart from that rule is sacrilege. But forasmuch as Paul neuer meant to adde too, or take away any thing from the law, he is vniustly accused of this fault. Whence we gather, that though the faithfull behaue themselves neuer so vprightly & blamelesly, yet can they not escape false & slanderous reports vntil they be admitted to purge themselves. But Paul was not only vnworthily and falsly slandered by the aduersaries: but when he would haue refuted their impudencie & false reportes, his mouth was stoppt by the deputie. Therefore he was inforced to depart fro the iudgement seat without defending himselfe. And Gallio refuseth to heare the cause, not for any euill will hee bare to Paul, but because it was not agreeable to the office of the deputie to giue iudgement concerning the religion of euery prouince. For though the Romans could not enforce the nations which were subiect to the to obserue their rites: yet least they should seem to allow that which they did tollerate, they forbade their magistrates to meddle with this part of iurisdiction. Here we see what the ignorance of true godlines doth, in setting in order the state of euery common wealth and dominion. All men confesse that this is the principall thing, that true religion bee in force and florish. Now when the true God is knowen, and the certain & sure rule of worshipping.

shipping him is vnderstood, there is nothing more equall, then that which God cōmandeth in his law, to wit, that those who beare rule with power, (hauing abolished cōtrary superstitions) defend the pure worship of the true God. But seeing that the Romanes did obserue their rites onely through pride & stubbornnes, & seeing they had no certaintie where there was no trueth, they thought that this was the best way they could take, if they shuld graunt libertie to those who dwelt in the prouinces to liue as the lusted. But nothing is more absurd then to leaue the worship of God to mēs choice. Wherefore it was not without cause that God cōmanded by Moses, that the king shuld cause a book of the law to be written out for himselfe: to wit, that being well instructed, & certaine of his faith, he might with more courage take in hand to maintein that which he knew certainly was right.

Deut. 17. 18

15 *Of words and names.* These words are not wel packed together. Yet Gallio speaketh thus of the law of God by way of cōtempt, as if the Iewish religion did consist onely in words & superfluous questions. And surely (as the nation was much giue to contētion) it is not to be doubted but that many did trouble theselues & others with superfluous trifles. Yea we heare with what Paul hitteth the in the teeth in many places, especially in the Epistle to Titus. Yet Galio is not worthy to be excused, who doth mock the holy law of god together with their curiosity. For as it behoued him to cut off all occasion of vaine contentions in words: so we must on the other side know that when the worship of God is in hand, the strife is not about words, but a matter of all other most serious, is handled.

Cap. 1. 14-
and 3. 5.

17 *All the Grecians hauing taken Sosthenes.* This is that Sosthenes whom Paul doth honourable couple with himselfe as his companion, in the beginning of the former Epistle to the Corinthians. And though there be no mention made of him before among the faithfull: yet it is to be thought that he was then one of Paul his companions & aduocates. And what fury did inforce the Grecians to run headlong vpon him, saue only because it is allotted to all the children of God to haue the world set against them and offended with them & their cause, though vnknown? wherefore there is no cause why such vniust dealing should trouble vs at this day, when wee see the miserable church oppugned on euerie side. Moreouer, the frowardnes of mans nature is depainted out vnto vs as in a table: admit we graūt that the Jewes wer hated euery where for good causes, yet why are the Greciās rather displeased with Sosthenes a modest mā, then with the autors of the tumult, who troubled Paul without any cause? namely, this is the reasō: because when men are not gouerned with the spirit of god, they are caried headlong vnto euil as it wer by the secret inspiratiō of nature: notwithstanding it may be, that they bare Sosthenes such hatred, thinking he had lodged wicked mē to raise sedition.

Neither did Gallio care for any of these things. This loosenesse must be imputed not so much to the sluggishnes of the deputie as to the hatred of the Iewish religion. The Romans could haue wished that the remembrance of the true God had bin buried. And therefore when as it was lawfull for them to vowe their vowe, and to pay them to all the Idols of

Asia

Asia and Grecia: it was a deadly fact to do sacrifice to the god of Israel. Finally, in the common liberty of all manner superstition, only true religion was accepted. This is the cause that Gallio winketh at the iniurie done to Sosthenes. He professed of late that he would punish iniuries if anye were done: now he suffereth a guiltlesse man to be beaten before the iudgement seate. Whence cometh this sufferance, saue onely because he did in heart desire that the Iewes might one slea another, that their religion might be put out with them. But for as much as by the mouth of Luke, the spirite condemneth Gallio his carelesnes, because he did not aide a man which was vniustly punished: let our magistrates know that they be farre more inexcusable; if they winke at iniuries & wicked factes, if they bridle not the wantonnes of the wicked, if they reach not forth their hand to the oppressed, But & if the sluggish are to looke for iust damnation, what terrible iudgement hangeth ouer the heades of those who are vnfaithful & wicked, who by fauouring euil causes, & bearing with wicked factes, set vp as it were a banner of want of punishment, and are fauours to kindle boldnes to do hurt?

18 And when Paul had tarried there many dayes, hauing taken his leaue of the brethren he sailed into Syria, Priscilla and Aquila accompanying him, when he had shauen his head at Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19 And he came to Ephesus, where he left them. And when he had entred into the Synagogue, he disputed with the Iewes.

20 And when they desired him that he would stay longer time with them, he did not consent.

21 But tooke his leaue, saying, I must needs keepe the feast which is at hand in Ierusalem: but I will returne to you againe Godwilling. And he loosed from Ephesus.

22 And when he was come downe to Cesaria, and was gone vp and had saluted the Church, he came downe to Antioch.

23 And when he had tarried there some time, he departed, walking through the countrie of Galacia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

18 And when he had tarried there many daies. Paul his constancie appeareth in this, in that he is not driuen away with fear, least he should trouble the disciples who were as yet ignorant & weak, with his sodaine and vntimely departure. We read in many other places, that when persecution was raised against him elsewhere, he fled forthwith. What is the cause then that he staieeth at Corinthus: to wit, when he saw that the enemies wer prouoked with his presence to rage against the whol church he did not doubt but that the faithfull should haue peace and rest by his departure: but now when he seeth their malice bridleled, so that they can not hurt the flock of God, he had rather sting and nettle them: then by departing to minister vnto them any new occasiō of rage. Furthermore this was the third iourney which Paul took to Ierusalem. For going frō Damascus he went once vp that he might be made knowne to the Apostles. And he was sent the second time with Barnabas that he might handle and end the controuerfie about ceremonies. But Luke doth not

set downe for what cause hee now tooke such a long and laborous iourney, determining with all speed, to returne.

When he had shorne his head. It is yncertaine whether that be spoken of Aquila or of Paul; neither skilleth it much. Though I interpret it willingly of Paul; because it semeth to me a likely thing, that he did this for because of the Iewes, vnto whom he was about to com. Assuredly I think this to be a thing which all men graunt, that hee made not any ceremoniall vow for his own cause only, that he might do some worship to god. He knew that that was to continue only for a time which God commaunded vnder the law to the old people: and we know how diligently he teacheth that the kingdome of God consisteth not in these externall elements, and how straightly he vrgeth the abrogating thereof. It had byn an absurd thing for him to bind his owne conscience with that religion from which he had loosed al other men.

Therefore he did sheare his head for no other cause, saue onely that he might apply himselfe to the Iewes who were, as yet ignorant, & not thoroughly taught: as he doth testifie that he tooke vpon him the voluntary obseruing of the law, from which he was freed, that hee might gain those who wer vnder the law. If any mā obiekt that it was not lawfull for him to make semblance of a vow, which he had not made from his hart: we may easily answer, that as touching the substance of purifying hee did not dissemble: and that he vsed the ceremonie which was as yet free: not as if God did require such worship, but that he might somewhat bear with the ignorant. Therefore the Papists are ridiculous when they set frō hence an example of making vowes. Paul was moued with no religiō to make his vow: but these men place a feigned worship of God in vowes. Respect of time inforced Paul to keepe the rites of the lawe: these men doe nothing els but intangle in superstition the church of Christ, which was set free long agoe. For it is one thing to bring in vs again old ceremonies vsed long ago, and another, to tolerate the same beeing as yet vsed, vntill such time as they may by little and little grow out of vs. I omit that the Papists in vaine and foolishly compare the shauing of their Priestes with the signe of purifying, whiche God had allowed in the Lawe. But because we need not stande any longer to refuse them, let this one thing suffice vs: that Paul bound himselfe with a vowe that he might bryng those which were weake to Christe, at least that he might not offend them, which vowe hee knewe was of no importaunce before God.

1. Cor. 9. 29

19. *Entring into the Synagogue.* In that hee shooke his garment at Corinthus, it was done for that cause (as this place teacheth) that hee might cast off the whole nation: but only such as hee had already tried to be of desperate obstinacie. Now he commeth afresh vnto the Ephesi-ans, that he might trie whether he could find any more obediēce amōg them. Furthermore, it is a wonder, that seeing it appeareth by Luke his report, that he was heard more patiently in this Synagogue then in any other place, & also that he was requested to tarry, he did not grant their request. Hēce we may easily gather that which I said before, that he had

some

some great cause to go vp to Ierusalem in hast. Also he himself sheweth that he must make hast, saying, I must keepe the feast which is at hande at Ierusalem. Neither is it to be doubted but that after he had set things in good order there, he departed with their good leaue: and we may gather out of Luke his wordes that they did admit his excuse, least the repulse should offend them. And this is worth the noting, that when better hope to doe good is offered vs, then wee were wont to haue, wee are drawen vnto diuers affaires as it were by the hand of God: that we may learne to giue ouer our selues to be gouerned at his pleasure.

The feast. That which I said of late touching the vow, doth also appertaine vnto the feast day. For Paul meant not to do thereby any dutie of godlinesse to God: but to be at the assembly, wherein he might do more good then at any other time of the yere. For the Epistle to the Galathians doth sufficiently testifie what accout he made of difference of daies. And we must note that he maketh no promise touching his return, with out vsing this exception, if it please the Lord. We do all confesse that we be not able to stirre one finger without his direction: but because there reigneth in men so great arrogancie euery where, that they dare determine any thing (passing ouer God) not onely for the time to come, but also for many yeres: wee must oftentimes thinke vpon this reuerence and sobrietie, that wee may learne to make our counsels subiect to the will and prouidence of God: least if we delyberate and take counsell as those vse to doe, who thinke that they haue fortune at their commaundement, we be iustly punished for our rashnesse. And though ther be not so great religion in wordes, but that we may at our pleasure say that we wil do this or that: yet is it good to accustome our selues to vse certain formes in our speeches, that they may put vs in mind that God doth direct all our doings.

Gal. 4. 10.

22 *When he came down to Casarea:* Though Luke saith in a word that Paul saluted the church at Ierusalem: yet is it certain that he was drawn thither with some great necessitie. And yet we may gather by this text, that he stayed not long at Ierusalem: peraduenture because things fell not out as he would. Moreover, he declareth that his iourney in his returne was not idle or barren, in that he saith that he strengthened al the disciples: vndoubtedly not without great paines taking, because he was enforced to goe hither and thither, and oft to turne out of his way for this word *cathexes* doth signifie a continuall course. Now we haue already declared in what respect those bee called Disciples who had giuen their names to Christ, and professed the name of Christ: to wit, because there is no godlines without true instruction. They had in deed their pastours vnder whom they might profit: yet the greater Paul his authority was, and the more excellent spirit he had giuen him, so they were not a litle strengthened by his passing by them: especially seeing he was the chief workmaster in the founding of all these churches.

Cha. 9. 36.

24 *And a certaine Iewe named Apollos, borne in Alexandria, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus being mightie in the scriptures.*

25 He

- 25 *He was instructed in the way of the Lord, & being fervent in the spirit he spake and taught diligently those things which are the Lords: knowing onelie the Baptisme of Iohn.*
- 26 *And he began to speake freely in the synagoge: whom when Priscilla and Aquila had heard, they tooke him to their companie, & shewed him the way of the Lord more perfectly.*
- 27 *And when he was determined to goe into Achaia, the brethren exhorting him, wrote to the disciples that they should receive him, who when he was come, he helped them much who had beleeued through grace.*
- 28 *For he ouercame the Iewes mightily, and that openly, shewing by the Scriptures that Iesus was Christ.*

24 *A certaine Iew.* This ought for good causes to be ascribed to the providence of God, in that whiles Paul is inforced to depart from Ephesus, Apollos cometh in his place, to supplie his absence. And it is very expedient to know the beginning of this man of what sort it was, for as much as he was also Paul his successour among the Corinthians, & did behaue himselfe so excellently, and did his faithful indeuour, and tooke great paines, so that Paul commendeth him honorably as a singular fellowe in office. I haue planted (saith he) Apollo hath watered. Also these things haue I figuratiuely appointed vnto my self and Apollos. Luke giueth him first two titles of commendatiō: that he was eloquent, & mighty in the Scriptures: afterward he wil adde his zeale, faith and constancy. And though Paul doe truely denie that the kingdome of God consisteth in words; and he himselfe was not commended for eloquence: yet dexterity in speaking & reasoning, (such as Luke doth here comend) is not to be despised: especially when no pomp or vain boasting is sought after by vsing fine words & great eloquence: but he which is to teach couereth it sufficient for him without fraud or ambition, without lofty words & curious cunning, plainly to lay open the matter he hath in hand. Paul was without eloquence: the Lord wold haue the chiefe Apostle to want this vertue, to the end the power of the spirit might appeare more excellent in his rude & homely speech. And yet was he furnished with such eloquence as was sufficiēt to set forth the name of Christ, & to maintain the doctrine of saluation. But as the distribution of the gifts of the spirit is diuers & manifold, Paul his infācy, that I may so call it, did no whit let but that the Lord might choose to himselfe eloquent ministers. Furthermore, least any man shuld think that Apollo his eloquence was profane or vaine, Luke saith that it was ioined with great power: namely, that he was mighty in the scriptures. Which I expound thus, that he was not onely well and soundly exercised in the scriptures: but that he had the force and efficacy thereof, that beyng armed with them, hee did in all conflicts get the vpper hande. And this (in my iudgement) is rather the prayse of the Scripture then of manne, that it hath sufficient force both to defend the truth, and also to refute the subtiltie of Satan.

1. Cor. 3. 6.
4. 6.

29 *He was instructed.* That which Luke addeth shortly after, seemeth

Luke. i. 76.
Ib. 16. & 17.

not to agree with this commendation, to wit, that he knew only the baptisme of Iohn. But this later member is added by way of correction. Nevertheless these two agree very well together: that he vnderstood the doctrine of the Gospel, because he both knew that the Redeemer was giuen to the worlde, and also was well and sincerely instructed concerning the grace of reconciliation: and yet had he beene trayned vponly in the principles of the Gospel, so much as coulde be had out of Iohn his institution. For we knowe that Iohn was in the midst betweene Christ and the prophets: and of his office doth both his father Zacharias intreate in his tongue, and also the Angell out of the prophēcie of Malachie. Surely seeing that hee carried the light before Christe, and did highly extoll his power, his Disciples are for good causes saide to haue had knowledge of Christe. Moreouer, the speeche is woorth the noting, that, He knewe the Baptisme of Iohn. For thence we gather the true vse of the Sacramentes: to wit, that they enter vs in some certaine kind of doctrine, or that they establish that faith which wee haue imbraced. Surely it is wickednesse and impious profanation to pull them away from doctrine. Wherefore that the Sacraments may bee rightly administred, the voyce of the heauenly doctrine must founde there. For what is the Baptisme of Iohn? Luke comprehendeth all his ministrye vnder this woorde: not onelie because doctrine is annexed vnto Baptisme, but also because it is the foundation and head thereof, without which it should be a vaine and dead ceremonye.

Being feruent in spirit he spake. Apollos hath another commendation giuen him in these wordes, that he was inflamed with an holie zeale to teache. Doctrine without zeale is either like a sworde in the hande of a mad man, or els it lieth still as colde and without vse, or els it serueth for vaine and wicked boasting. For wee see that some learned men become slouthful: other some (which is worse) become ambitious: other some (which is of al, the worst) trouble the church with contention and brawling. Therefore that doctrine shalbe vsuauerie, which is not ioyned with zeale. But let vs remember that Luke putteth the knowledge of the Scripture in the first place, which must be the moderation of zeale, for we know that many are feruent without consideration; as the Iewes did rage against the gospel, by reason of a peruerse affection which they did beare toward the lawe: and euen at this day we see how whorthe the papistes bee, who are carried headlong with furious violence, being pricked forward with an opinion vnadvisedly conceiued. Therefore let knowledge be present that it may gouern zeale. And now it is said that zeale was the cause of diligence, because Apollos gaue himselfe to teach diligently. But and if that man being not yet thoroughly & perfectly taught in the Gospel, did preach Christ so diligently and freely: what excuse doe those men hope to haue, who know that more perfectly and fullie, which he knew not as yet, if they doe not indeuour so muche as in them lieth, to further and aduaunce the kingdome of Christ. Luke doth attribute zeale to the spirit therefore, because it is a rare and peculiar

gift: neither doe I so expound it that Apollos was moued and pricked forward with the instinct of his mind, but by motion of the holy Spirit.

26 *Whom when Priscilla.* By this it appeareth how farre Priscilla and Aquila were from the loue themselves, and from enuying another mans vertue, in that they deliuer those things familiarly and priuately to an eloquent man, which he may afterward vtter publicly. They excelled not in the same grace, wherein hee did excell, and peraduenture they might haue been despised in the congregation. Moreouer they most diligently helpe him whom they see better furnished as well with eloquence as the vse of the scripture: so that they keepe silence, and he alone is heard.

Againe, this was no small modestie which was in Apollos in that hee doeth suffer himselfe to bee taught and instructed not only in an handicraftsman, but also by a woman. Hee was mightie in the scripture, and did surpasse them: but as touching the accomplishment of the kingdome of Christ, those doe pollish and trim him who might seeme to bee scarce fit ministers. Also we see that at that time women were not so ignorant of the word of God as the Papistes will haue them: forasmuch as wee see that one of the chiefe teachers of the Church was instructed by a woman. Notwithstanding wee must remember that Priscilla did execute this function of teaching at home in her owne house, that shee might not ouerthrowe the order prescribed by God and nature.

27 *When he was determind.* Luke doth not expresse for what cause Apollos would goe to Achaia. Notwithstanding wee gather out of the text that he was not allured with any priuate commoditie, but because more plentifull frute in spreading abroad the Gospell did shewe it selfe there: because the brethren did more encourage him with their exhortation, and did spurre him when hee did already runne. Which they would not haue done, vnlesse it had been for the common profite of the Church. For it had been an absurd thing to intreate a man to depart to another place, whose faithfull industrie they already vsed, and did knowe that they should haue neede of him afterward, vnlesse there had been som better recompence offered. And I take it that the brethren of Ephesus wrote to those of Achaia, not onely that they shoulde prouide lodging for the man, but also that they shoulde suffer him to teache. This is holy commendation in deede, when wee studie to extoll euery good man with our testimonie and consent: least the giftes of the holie ghost, which he hath giuen to euery man for the edifying of the church, lie buried.

When he came. The brethren forsaue this, who had already had experience thereof, when they exhorted him to addressse himselfe to that iourney, which he had already in minde conceived. And whereas it is saide that he helped the faithfull much, wee may take it two wayes: eyther that he helped those who were not so well furnished, and that hee did support them to beat downe the pride of their enemies: for euery man was not able to haue weapon in readinesse, to vndertake a harde combat against old enemies, who would neuer haue yeelded vnlesse

they had been inforced: or that hee aided them least their faith should faile being shaken with the gainfaying of the enemies: which thing doth oftentimes befall the weake. I take it that they wer holpen both waies: that hauing a skilfull and practised captaine, they gate the victorie in the conflict. Secondly, that their faith was fortified with a new prop, that it might be without danger of wauering. Furthermore Luke semeth to note that the brethren were holpen with this stoutnesse and constancie, when as he sayth, that he disputed publicly with the Iewes. For this was a signe of zeale and boldnesse, not to flie the light. Whereas in the ende of the sentence, these wordes are vsed, through grace: it doth either agree with the worde going before, they beleueed: or els it must be referred vnto the helpe wherewith he helped the brethren. The former interpretation is nothing hard. For the meaning thereof shall be this, that the faithful were illuminate by the grace of God, that they might beleue: as if he had said: The brethren who were alredie called by the benefite of God vnto faith, were furthered. Yet the other text seemeth to agree better, that Apollos in imparting that grace which hee had receiued, with the brethren, did helpe them. So that, through grace, shall import as muchie, as according to the measure of the grace receiued.

28 *Hee ouercome the Iewes.* By this it appeareth to what vse that abilitytie which Apollos had, (in that he was mighty in the holy scriptures), did serue: to wit, because he had a strong and forcible proof to reprove and ouercome the enemies withall. Also the state of the disputation is briefly set downe, that Iesus is Christe. For this was out of question among the Iewes, that Christe was promised to bee the deliuerer: but it was a hard matter to perswade the, that Iesus the son of Mary was this Christ through whom saluation was offered. Therefore it was expedient for Apollos so to dispute concerning the office of Christe that hee might proue that the testimonies of the Scripture were fulfilled in the sonne of Mary: and that hee might thereby gather that hee was Christe.

Also this place doth testifie, that the scripture is profitable not onely to teach, but also to breake the obstinacie of those, which doe not obey and followe willingly. For our faith should not otherwise bee firme enough, vnlesse there were an euident demonstration extaunt there of those thinges, which are necessarie to be knowen for saluation. Surely if the lawe and the prophetes had so great light, that Apollos did thereby proue manifestly that Iesus is Christe, as if he did point out the matter with his finger: the adding of the Gospel muste bring this to passe at least, that the perfect knowledge of Christe may bee set from the whole scripture.

Wherefore it is detestable blasphemie against God in that the papists say, that the scripture is darke and doubtfull. For to what end should god haue spoken vnlesse the plaine & inuincible truth should shew it selfe in his words? And wheras they infer, that we must stand to the authority of the church, & they are not to dispute with heretiks out of the scriptures: their

their cauil is sufficiently refuted by Luke. For seeing there was nothing more stubborn then the Iewes, we need not to feare but that those were upon whom Apollon trusted; and ouercame them, that sufficed against all heretikes: seeing that by them we get the victorie of the diuill, the prince of all errors.

CHAP. XIX.

And Luke to passe when Apollon was at Corinth, that Paul hauing gone through the upper partes came to Ephesus, and hauing found certaine disciples he said vnto them: *Haue ye receiued the holy ghost since ye beleened? But they said vnto him, yea: we haue not so much as heard whether there be any holy ghost.*

3 And he said vnto them, wherewith were yee then baptised? And they sayde, with the Baptisme of Iohn.

4 And Paul said, Iohn truly baptizeth with the baptisme of repentance, speaking to the peoples, that they should beleue in him who should come after him: that is, in Christ Iesus.

5 When they heard these things they were baptised in the name of the Lord Iesus.

6 And when Paul had laide his handes vpon them, the holy Ghost came vppon them, and they spake with tongues and did prophesie.

7 And all the men were about twelue.

8 Luke sheweth here that the Church of Ephesus was not only confirmed and increased by Paul his returne, but also that there was a miracle wrought there, because the visible graces of the spirite were giuen to certaine rude and newe Disciples. Furthermore, it is not knownen, whether they were inhabitants of the citie, or strangers, neyther doth it greatly skill. It is not to bee doubted, but that they were Iewes; because they had receiued the Baptisme of Iohn: also it is to be thought, that they dwelt at Ephesus; when Paule founde them there.

9 Whether they had receined the holie Ghost. The end of the history doth shew that Paul doth not speake in this place of the spirite of regeneration, but of the special gifts, which God gaue to diuers at the beginning of the Gospel, for the common edifying of the Church. But now vppon this interregation of Paule ariseth a question, whether the spirite were common to all euerie where at that time. For if he were giuen onely to a fewe, why doth he ioine him with faith, as if they were so linked together, that they could not be separate? Peraduenture, they were none of the common sort: or because, they were an indifferent number, that is twelue: Paul demaundeth whether they were all without the giftes of the spirite. Notwithstanding I thinke thus, that so manye Iewes were offered in presence of the Gentiles; not by chaunce but by the counsaile of God, and that at one time beeyng Disciples, that is, of the number of the faithfull, who did notwithstanding confesse that they

they were ignorant of the principal glory of the gospel; which was apparant in spirituall giftes: that by them Paul his ministerie might be beautified, and set forth. For it is vnlike that Apollos leste: so few Disciples at Ephesus: and he might haue taught them better; sithence that hee learned the waye of the Lorde perfectly of Priscilla and Aquila.

Moreouer, I doe not doubt but that the brethren of whom Luke spake before, were other then these. In summe, when Paul seeth that these men doe professe the name of Christ, to the end he may haue a more certaine triall of their faith, he asketh them whether they haue receiued the holy Ghost. For it appeareth by Paul himself that this was a signe & token of the grace of God to establish the credite of doctrine: I would know of you whether yee receiued the holy ghost by the workes of the law, or by the hearing of faith.

Gal. 3. 2.

Wee knowe not whether there bee anie holie Ghost. Howe could it be, that men being Iewes heard nothing of the spirite, concerning which the prophetes speake euery where, and whose commendations and titles are extant in the whole Scripture. Surely wee gather by this that Paule did neither speake generally of the Spirite: and that these menne as they were asked, did denie that they knewe those visible graces, wherewith GOD had beautified the kingdome of his sonne. Therefore they confesse that they knowe not whether God giue such giftes. Therefore there is in the woorde Spirite the figure Metonymia. And this sense doth that confirme, that if they had altogether denied that they knew any thing concerning the spirite of God, Paul woulde not haue passed ouer with silence such a grosse error, yea an error altogether monstrous. When he demaundeth to what ende, or how they were baptised, hee sheweth therewithall, that wheresoeuer Christ had been soundly and throughly preached, the visible graces did also appeare; that suche woorship might be common to all Churches. Wherefore no maruell if Paul woonder that the faithfull are ignorant of such glorie of Christ, which God woulde haue to bee apparant euery where at that time: and adding a correction immediatly, he telleth them, that they must not stay in those rudiments which they had learned: because it was Iohn his office to prepare Disciples for Christ.

4 *Iohn triueth.* Paul his admonition tended to this end, that these men being conuict of their ignorance, might desire to goe forward. He sayth that Iohn preached of Christ who was to come. Therefore he set out his disciples, that running in the course they might goe toward Christ, who was not as yet reuealed. Wherefore to the end these men may not flatter themselves, & refuse to go forward, he sheweth that they be yet far from the marke. For the feeling of want doth enforce men to desire that which is as yet lacking. The summe cometh to this end, as if Paul had said, Before Christ was glorified, this power of his did not appeare in the world: when he was ascended into heaue, he wold haue his kingdome flourish thus. Therefore the graces of the spirit were much lesse shedde out when Iohn

was as yet in the course of his ambassage, which doe nowe declare. that Christ sitteth at the right hand of his father. Forasmuch as he had not as then openly shewed himself to be the redeemer of the world. Therefore know yee that you must goe farther forward: because yee be farre from the mark. So that hee doeth plainly shewe that the faith of the godly who had beene taught by Iohn, ought to haue looked vnto Christ who was to come, least these men should stand still being newly entred, without going any farther. And euen by this also are we taught that the Baptisme of Iohn was a token of Repentance and remission of sinnes, and that our Baptisme at this day doth not differ any thing from it, saue onely that Christ is already reuealed, and in his death and resurrection our saluation is made perfect: and so Baptisme was brought vnto his effect: because out of that fountaine of Christes death and resurrection whereof I haue spoken, floweth repentance; and thither is faith referred. againe that it may thence fet free righteousnes. In summe, Paule sheweth plainly that that was the baptisme of regeneration and renouation as is ours. And because both purging and newnesse of life doeth flow from Christ alone, hee saith that it was grounded in his faith, by which words we be also taught, that hereupon. dependeth all the force of Baptisme, that we lay holde vpon by faith in Christ whatsoeuer Baptisme doth figure: so farre off is it that the vtward signe doeth derogate from, or diminish the grace of Christ any iote.

When they heard these things. Because the men of old had conceiued an opinion that the Baptisme of Iohn and of Christ were diuerse, it was no inconuenient thing for them to bee baptized againe, who were onely prepared with the Baptisme of Iohn. But that that diuersitie was falsely and wickedly by them beleueed, it appeareth by this, in that it was a pledge and token of the same adoption, and of the same newnesse of life, which we haue at this day in our Baptisme: and therefore we do not reade that Christ did baptise those againe, who came from Iohn vnto him. Moreouer Christ receiued Baptisme in his owne flesh, that he might couple himselfe with vs by that visible signe: but if that feigned diuersitie bee admitted, this singular benefit shall fall away and perishe, that baptism is common to the sonne of God and to vs, or that we haue all one Baptisme with him. But this opinion needeth no long refutation, because to the end they may perswade that these two Baptismes be diuerse, they must needs shew first wherein the one differeth from the other: but a most excellent likelyhood answereth on both parts, and also, the agreement and conformitie of the parts, which causeth vs to confesse that it is all one Baptisme. Nowe the question is whether it were lawfull to repeat the same: and furious men in this our age trusting to this testimonie, went about to bring in Baptising againe. Some take Baptisme for newe institution or instruction: of whose minde I am not, because as their exposition is too much racked, so it smelleth of a stinking hole.

Mat. 3. 19.

Other some denie that Baptisme was repeated: because they were baptized amisse by some foolish enemie of Iohn. But because their con-
 cluſure

Chap. 1.5.
and 11.6.

lecture hath no colour; yea the wordes of Paul doe rather import that they were the true and naturall disciples of Iohn, and Luke doth honourable call them disciples of Christ: I doe not subscribe to this opinion: and yet I denie that the baptisme of water was repeated, because the wordes of Luke import no other thing saue onely that they were baptized with the Spirit. First it is no newe thing for the name of Baptisme to be translated vnto the Giftees of the Spirit, as we saw in the first and in the eleuenth Chapters, where Luke said, that when Christ promised to his Apostles to sende the Spirit visible, he called it Baptisme. Also that when the Spirit came down vpon Cornelius, Peter remembered the wordes of the Lorde; yee shalbe baptized with the holy Ghost. Againe wee see that those visible giftees are spoken off by name in this place; and that the same are giuen with baptisme. And whereas it followeth immediatly, that when he had laide his hands vpon them, the Spirit came, I take it to be added by way of interpretation; for it is a kinde of speaking much vsed in the scripture; first to set downe a thing briefly, and afterward to make it more plaine. Therefore that which by reason of breuitie was somewhat obscure, doth Luke better expresse; and lay more open, saying; that by laying on of handes the Spirit was giuen them. If any man object, that when Baptisme is put for the giftees of the Spirit, it is not taken simplic; but hauing somewhat added to it: I answer that Luke his meaning doth sufficiently appeare by the text: and againe, that Luke doth allude vnto the Baptisme whereof he spake. And surely if you vnderstande it of the externall signe, it shall be an absurde thing that it was giuen them, without vsing any better doctrine. But and if you take it metaphorically for institution, the speech shalbe as yet harsh: and the narration should not agree, that After they were taught the holy Ghost came downe vpon them. Furthermore as I confesse that this laying on of handes was a sacrament: so I say that those fel through ignorance, who did continually imitate the same. For seeing that all men agree in this, that it was a grace which was to last onely for a time, which was shewed by that signe: it is a peruerse and ridiculous thing to retaine the signe sythence the truth is taken away. There is another respect of Baptisme and the Supper, wherein the Lorde doeth testifie that those giftees are laid open for vs, which the Church shal enjoy euen vntill the ende of the worlde. Wherefore we must diligently and wisely distinguish perpetuall sacramentes from those which last onely for a time; least vaine and frivolous visures haue a place among the Sacramentes. Whereas the men of old time did vse laying on of handes, that they might confirme the profession of faith in those who were growen vp, I do not mislike it: so that no man thinke that the grace of the Spirit is annexed to such a ceremonie; as doeth Ierome against the Luciferians.

But the Papists are worthe of no pardon, who being not content with the ancient rite, durst thrust in rotten and filthy annointing: that it might bee not onely a confirmation of Baptisme but also a more worthy

worthie sacrament, whereby they imagine that the faithfull are made perfect, who were before only half perfect: whereby those are armed against the battell, who before had their sinnes only forgiven them. For they haue not been afraid to spue out these horrible blasphemies.

8 And going into the Synagogue, he spake freely about three moneths disputing & perswading concerning the kingdome of God.

9 And when some waxed hard hearted, that they could not beleene, speaking euill of the way before the multitude, departing from them he did separate the disciples, and disputed daily in the schoole of one Tyrannus.

10 In this he did by the space of two yeres, so that all which dwelt in Asia, heard the worde of the Lord Iesus, both Iewes and Greekes.

11 And the Lord shewed no small myracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his bodie were brought napkins and puerles vnto those that were sicke, and the diseases departed from them, and the euill spirits came out of them.

8. *Going into the Synagogue.* By this we gather that Paul beganne with the companie of the godlie, who had alreadie giuen their names to Christ: Secondly, that he came into the Synagogue, that he might gather together into one bodie of the Church, the rest of the Iewes who knew not Christ as yet, or at least who had not as yet receyued hym. And he saith that Paul behaued himselfe boldly, that we may know that hee was not therefore hearde by the space of three monethes, because he did craftily couer the doctrine of the Gospel, or did insinuate himselfe by certaine darke crookes. Luke doth also by and by expresse some token of boldnesse, shewing that he disputed and perswaded touching the kingdome of God. And we knowe that by this word is oftentimes noted that restoring which was promised to the fathers, and which was to be fulfilled by the comming of Christ. For seeing that without Christ there is an euill fauoured and confused scattering abroad and ruine of all thinges, the prophetes did attribute this not in vaine to the Messias who was to come, that it should come to passe that he shoulde establish the kingdome of God in the worlde: And now because this kingdome doth bring vs backe from falling and slyding backe, vnto the obedience of God, and maketh vs sonnes of enemies: it consisteth first in the free forgueneesse of sinnes, whereby God doth reconcile vs to himselfe, and doth adopt vs to bee his people: secondly, in newnesse of life, whereby hee fashioneth and maketh vs like to his owne image. He saith that he disputed and perswaded: meaning that Paule did so dispute, that he proued that with sound reasons, which he did alleadge: that done, he vsed the prickles of godlie exhortations; whereby he pricked forward his hearers. For no profounde disputations shal make vs obedient to GOD, vnlesse we bee mooued with godlie admonitions.

9 *Seeing their hearts were hardened.* We do not read that Paul was heard so paciety & so fauorably by the Iewes at any place, as at Ephesus, at his first

first coming. For where as others raising tumults did driue him away, he was requested by these to tarrie longer. Now after that he had inuoured by the space of three moneths to erect the kingdom of God among them, the vngodlines and stubbornnesse of many doeth shewe it selfe. For Luke saith that they were hardened: and surely such is the power of the heavenly doctrine, that it doeth either make the reprobate mad, or els more obstinate: & that not of nature, but accidētally, as they say: bicause when they be vrged by the truth, their secret poise breaketh out. Luke adderh that they spake euill of the way before the people. For the cōtemnners of the gospel do resist that deadly among others which they will not embrace. And this do they to no other end saue only because they be desirous (if it can be) to haue al men partners in their impietie. It is well known that euery ordinaunce is vnderstoode by this word *way*: but heere it is referred vnto the gospel of Christ. Now Luke saith that Paul departed from them, and did separate the brethren, by which example we are taught, that when we haue experience of desperate and vncurable stubbornnesse, we must loose our labour no longer. Therefore Paule admonisheth Titus, to auoide a man that is an heretike, after once, or twise admonition. For the word of God is vniustly blasphemed, if it be cast to dogges and swine. Also we must prouide for the weake, least through wicked backbitings and slaundering of sound doctrine, their godlines be subuerted. Therefore Paul did separate the Disciples, least the goates should with their stink infect the flock of sheepe: Secondly that the pure woorthippers of God might make profession freely.

Tit. 3. 10.

Disputing daily. This place sheweth how continuall Paul his diligence was in teaching: and that they be too churlish & dainty, who are streighe way wearie of learning. For we see how few come daily, who are readie and apt to heare. And though he had a particular care for the household flocke, which he had gathered as into a sheepfold, yet he doth not suffer straungers to be destitute of his industrie: but continuing the course of his disputation, he trieth whether he can finde anie which are apt to be taught. He calleth it the schoole of Tyrannus, meaning no such man as had gotten the government of Asia: for the Romans bare rule throughout al Asia; but it is to be thought that the schole was built at the charge of one Tyrannus, and giuen to the Citie. Therefore the faithfull did vse a publike place, which bare the name of the builder, where they had their assemblies.

10 *All which dwelt:* Luke doth not meane that the men of Asia came thither to heare Paul; but that the smel of his preaching went throughout all Asia, and that the seede was sowne farre and wide: so that his labour was fruitfull not onely to one Citie, but also to places which were farre off: and that commeth to passe oftentimes, that when the truth of God is preached in one place, it soundeth where the voice of the minister cannot sound, being spread abroad farre and wide: because it is deliuered from hand to hand, and one doth teach another. For one man were not sufficient, vnlesse euerie man were for himselfe diligent to spread

spread abroad the faith.

11 *No small miracles.* Hee calleth miracles *virtutes* or powers, after the common custome of the scripture, which were testimonies of the extraordinarie power of God. And he sheweth that Paul his Apostleship was set forth with these ensignes, that his doctrine might haue the greater authoritie. For it is a common speech, That wonders & signes are shewed by the hande of men. So that the praise thereof is ascribed to God alone as to the author: & man is only the minister. And that he may the more amplifie the miracles, he saith that handkircheffes and partlets were brought vnto the sicke, which so soone as they touched they were healed. It is not vnknowne to what end Paul had such power given him: to wit, that he might proue himselfe to be a true Apostle of Christ, that he might make the gospel to be beleueed, and might confirme his ministerie. And here it is expedient to call to mind, those things which we had before touching the lawfull vse of miracles. And whereas God did heale the sicke with Pauls handkirchiffes, it tended to that ende, that euen those who had neuer seene the man, might notwithstanding reuerently embrace his doctrine though he himselfe were absent. For which cause the Papists are more blockish, who wrest this place vnto their reliques: as if Paul sent his handkircheffes, that men might worship them and kisse them in honour of him: as in papistrie they worship Frances his shoes and mantill, Roses girdle, Saint Margarets Combe, and such like trifles. Yea rather he did choose most simple things, least any superstition should arise by reason of the price or pompe. For he was fully determined to keepe Christ his glory sound and vndiminished.

13 And certaine of the vagabound Iewes exorcists assaied to name ouer those which had euill spirits, the name of the Lord Iesus, saying, We aduise you by Iesus whom Paul preacheth,

14 And there were certain sonnes of Sceua a Iew the chiefe of the Priests, who did so this.

15 And the euill spirit answered and said, Iesus I know, and Paul I know: but who are yee?

16 And the man in whom the euill Spirite was ranne vpon them, and ouercame them, and preuailed against them, so that they escaped out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was knowne to all both Iewes and Grecians, which dwelt at Ephesus. And feare came vpon them all, and the name of the Lord Iesus was magnified.

13 To the end it may more plainly appeare that the Apostleship of Paul was confirmed by those miracles whereof mention was made of late: Luke doth now teach that when certaine did falsely pretend the name of Christ, such abuse was most sharply punished: Whereby we gather that such miracles were wrought by the hande of Paul to no other end; saue onely that all men might knowe that he did faithfully preach Christ to bee the power of God: forasmuch as the Lorde did not onely

not suffer them to bee seperate from the pure doctrine of the Gospel: but did so sharply punish those who did draw them preposterously vnto their inchauntments: whence we gather againe, that whatsoever myracles doe darken the name of Christ, they be iugling castes of the diuell: and that those be cussomers and falsifiers, who draw the true miracles of God to any other ende, saue onely that true religion may be established.

Certaine exorcists. I doe not doubt but that this office did proceed of foolish emulation. God was wont to exercise his power diuerse wayes among the Iewes: and he had vsed the Prophetes in times past as ministers to driue away diuels: vnder colour hereof they inuented coniuration, and hereuppon was erected vnaduisedly an extraordinarie function without the commaundement of God. Also it may be that (God appointing it so to be) it did somewhat: not that he fauoured it preposterously, but that they might more willingly retaine the religion of their fathers vntil the comming of Christ. Vnder the reigne of Christ, wicked ambition caused strife betweene the Christians and the Iewes. For exorcists were made after the will of men: after that (as superstition doeth alwayes waxe worse and worse) the Pope would haue this common to all his Clarkes, who were to be promoted vnto an higher degree. For after that they be made doorekeepers, forthwith the coniuring of diuels is committed to them: and by verie experience they set themselves to be laught at. For they are inforced to confesse that they giue a vaine title, and such as is without effect, for where is the power they haue to coniure diuels: and the very exorcists themselves do take vpon them to their owne reproch, an office which they neuer put in practice. But this falseth out iustly, that there is no end of erring, when men depart from the word of God. As touching these men we gather that they were wandering rogues and such as went from dore to dore, of which sort wee see many at this day in poperie: for he saith that they went about. By which words he giueth vs to vnderstand that they went to and fro as occasion was offered them to deceiue men.

We adiuere you by Iesus. It is a thing like to be true that these deceiuers flee vnto the name of Christ, that they might get newe power, whereof they had falsely boasted before, or because the power which they had did cease, that they might darken the Gospel. This inuocation had two faultes: for where as they were enemies to Paul his doctrine, they abuse the colour thereof without faith, as it were vnto magicall inchauntmentes: secondly they take to themselves without the calling of God that which is not in mans hande. But the lawfull calling vppon the name of God and Christ, is that which is directed by faith; and doeth not passe the bounds of a mans calling. Wherefore wee are taught by this example; that we must attempt nothing vnlesse wee haue the light of the word of God going before vs, least we suffer like punishment for our sacrilege. The Lorde himselfe commaundeth vs to pray. Whosoeuer they be which haue not the gift of miracles giuen them, let them keepe themselves within these bounds. For whē the Apostles made the vncleane spirits

spirites come out of men, they had God for their authour, & they knew that they did faithfully execute the ministerie which he had enioyned them.

16 *The man running upon them.* That is attributed to the man which the diuell did by him. For hee had not been able to doe such an acte of himselfe, as to put to flight seuen strong young men being wounded and naked. And to set downe for a certaintie how the diuell doeth dwell in men, we cannot, saue only that there may be a contrarietie between the spirite of God, and the spirite of Satan. For as Paul teacheth that we be the temples of God; because the spirite of God dwelleth in vs: so he saith againe, that Satan worketh effectually in all vnbeleeuers. Notwithstanding we must know that Luke speaketh in this place of a particular kinde of dwelling: to wit, when Satan hath the bridle so much that hee doth possesse the whole man.

Furthermore God meant to shew such a token, that he might declare that his power is not included in the sound of the voice, & that it is not lawefull superstitiously to abuse the name of his sonne. And when hee suffereth Satan to deceiue vs, let vs know that we be more sharply punished, then if he should wound vs in the flesh. For the false shew & colour of miracles, is an horrible inchantment to bewitch and besot the vnbeleeuers, that they may be drowned in deeper darknes, because they refused the light of God.

17 *There came feare.* The fruit of that vengeance which God brought vpon those who did wickedly abuse the name of Christ is this, in that they were all touchied with reuerence, least they should contemne that doctrine, whose reuenger the Lord had shewed by an euident token & testimonie he would be, and they were brought to reuerence Christe. For besides that God doth inuite vs by all his iudgements to come thus farre, that they may terrifie vs from sinning: in this example peculiarly was the maiesty of Christ sette foorth, and the authoritie of the gospel established, wherefore there is more heauy and grieuous punishment prepared for deceiuers, who with their inchauntments profane the name of Christ wittingly, least they promise to themselues that they shall scape vnpunished for such grosse sacrilege. Whereas he saith that it was made knowne to all men, it signifieth as much, as commonly or euery where. For his meaning is that the matter was much talked off among the people, to the end the name of Christ might be made knowne to mo men.

18 *And many of those which beleued came, confessing and shewing their works.*

19 *And many of those which vsed curious artes, bringing their bookes, burne them before them all: and when they had cast the price of them, they found it fiftie thousand peeces of syluer.*

20 *So might it grew the word of the Lord, and was confirmed.*

21 *And when these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in Spirit, having passed ouer Macedonia and Achaia, to goe to Ierusalem, saying, After that I haue bin there, I must also see Rome.*

22 And when he had sent two of those which ministered to him into Macedonia, to wit, Timothy and Erastus, he staid for a time in Asia.

18 *Many which beleened.* Luke bringeth fourth one token of that feare whercof he spake. For they did indeed declare that they wer thorowly touched and moued with the feare of God, who of their owne accord did confesse the faultes and offences of their former life, least thorow their dissimulation, they shoulde nourishe the wrath of GOD within. We know, what a hard matter it is to wring true confession out of those who haue offended, for seeing men count nothing more precious then their estimation, they make more account of shame then of truth. Yea so much as in them lyeth they seek to couer their shame. Therefore this voluntarie confessiō, was a testimonie of repentance & of fear. For no man vnlesse hee be thoroughly touched will make himselfe subiect to the slanders & reproches of men, & will willingly be iudged vpon earth, that he may be loosed and acquitted in heauen. When he saith, Many, by this wee gather that they had not all one cause, for it may bee that these men had corrupt cōsciences a long time: as manie are oftentimes infected with hidden and inward vices. Wherefore Luke doth not prescribe all men a common Law: but he setteth before them an example which those must follow who need like medicine. For why did these men confesse their facts, saue onely that they might giue testimonie of their repentance, and seeke counsaile and ease at Pauls hands? It was otherwise with those who came vnto the Baptisme of Iohn, confessing their sinnes. For by this meanes they did confesse that they did enter into repentance without dissimulation. But in this place Luke teacheth by one kind, after what sort the faithfull were touched with the reuerence of God, when God set before them an example of his seueritie. For which cause the impudencie of the Papists is the greater, who colour their tyranny by this fact. For wherein doeth their auricular confession agree with this example? First the faithfull confessed how miserablie they had bin deceiued by Satan before they came to the faith, bringing into the sight of men certain examples. But by the Popes Law it is required that men reckon vp all their wordes and deeds and thoughts. We reede that those men confessed this once. The Popes Law commandeth that it be repeated euery yeare at least. These men made confession of their owne accorde: the Pope bindeth all men with necessitie. Luke saith there came manie, not all: in the Pope his Law there is no exception. These men humbled themselues before the company of the faithfull: the Pope giueth a farre other commandement: that the sinner confesse his sinnes whisperingly in the eare of one priest. Lo how wel they apply the Scriptures to proue their subtiltie:

19 *Who vsed curious crafts.* Luke doeth not onely speake of magicall iuglings, but of friuolous and vaine studies, whereof the more part of men is for the most part too desirous. For hee yseth the word *periergas*: vnder which the Grecians comprehend whatsoeuer thinges haue in themselves no sound commoditie: but lead mens mindes and studies through

Mat. 3. 6.

through diuerse crookes vnprofitable. Such is iudiciall Astrologie, as they call it, and whatsoeuer diuinations men inuent to themselues against the time to come. They burne their bookes that they may cut off all occasion of erring both for themselues and for others. And whereas the greatnes of the price doeth not call them backe from indamaging themselues so much, they doe thereby better declare the studie of their godlines. Therefore as Luke did of late describe their confession in words, so now he setteth downe the confession they make in deeds. But because the Grecians take *argurion* for all kinde of money, it is vncertaine whether Luke doth speake of pence or sesterrians. Notwithstanding because it is certaine, that he exprest a summe that we might knowe that the faithfull did valiantly contemne gainer; I doe nothing doubt but that hee meaneth pence or some other better kinde of coyne. And fiftie thousande pence, make about nine thousande pounde of french money.

20 *Grew mightie.* The word *cata cratos*, doth signifie that the worde increased not a little, or that these proceedings were not common: as if he should say, that in those increasings appeared rare efficacie and such as was greater than it vsed commonly to be. The word *Grew* doe I referre vnto the number of menne, as if he should haue saide, that the Church was increased, new disciples being gathered together daily because doctrine is spread abroad. And I interpret that, that the worde was confirmed in euery one, thus, to wit, that they did profit in the obedience of the Gospel and in godlines more and more, & that their faith tooke deeper roote.

21 *He purposed in Spirit.* His meaning is that Paule purposed to take his iourney through the instinct and motion of the Spirit: that wee may knowe that all his whole life was framed according to Gods will and pleasure. And therefore hath hee the Spirit to bee the gouernour of his actions, because hee did both giue ouer himselfe by him to be ruled, and did also depend vpon his gouernement. Neither skilleth that which followeth, that he had not that successe in his iourney which hee did hope for, for God doeth oftentimes gouerne and rule his faithfull seruants, suffering them to bee ignorant of the ende. For hee will haue them so farre forth addicted to him, that they followe that which hee hath shewed them by his Spirit, euen shutting their eyes, when matters be doubtfull. Moreouer it is certaine that he was wholly addicted to profite the Churches omitting and forslowing his owne commoditie, in that hee had rather deprive himselfe of Timotheus a most excellent, to him, of all most faithfull, most deare, finallie a most fitte companion, than not to prouide for the Macedonians.

23 *And at that time there happened no small tumult about that way.*

24 *For a certaine man named Demetrius a siluer smyth, which made siluer shrines for Diana, brought no small gaires to the men of that occupation.*

- 25 Whom when hee had called together, and those who were makers of like things, he said, Men yee know that by this craft we haue aduantage:
- 26 And yee see and heare that not onely at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia this Paul hath perswaded, and turned away much people, saying that they be not gods which are made with hands.
- 27 And not onely this part cometh in daunger to vs, least it be set at nought: but also least the Temple of the great goddesse Diana be despiced, and it come to passe, that her maiestie be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipperh.
- 28 When they heard these things they were full of wrath, and cried out saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

23 Tumult about that way. Concerning this word Way let the readers vnderstand thus much, that it is heere taken for that which the Latines call Sect: the Greeke Philosophers call it Heresies or heresie. But because in the Church of God, where the vnitie of faith ought to reigne, there is nothing more odious or detestable, than for euerie man to choose at his pleasure that which he will followe: I thinke that Luke did flie that name which was for good causes infamous among the godlie, and that after the Hebrew phrase hee put way in steede of Ordinance. And as touching the summe of the matter, wee see howe wonderfully the Lorde did exercise his seruants. Hee did hope when hee did addresse himselfe for his iourney, that the Church would be quiet after his departure; and loe there ariseth an vprore at a sodaine, where hee did least feare. But in Demetrius it appeareth what a hurtfull plague couetousnesse is: For one man for his owne gaines sake is not afraide to trouble a whole Citie with sedition. And the craftes men, who were as fire brandes kindled by him, and doe spread abroad the fire euerie where, doe teach vs what an easie matter it is to cause filthie men and those whose belly is their God, to commit all manner wickednesse: especiallie if they liue onely by gaines euill gotten, and the hope of gaine be taken from them. Moreouer in this hystorie wee see a liuely image of our time. Demetrius and his bande raise a tumult: because if superstition whereby they were wont to get gaines be taken away, their craft will fall to ground. Therefore they fight as if it were for their life: least Demetrius goe without his fatte pray, and the rest want their daily lyuing. What zeale doeth at this day pricke forward the Pope, the horned Bishoppes, the Munkes, and all the rablement of the popish cleargie? Yea what furie doeth driue them, so sore to resist the Gospell? They boast that they striue for the Catholike faith: neither did Demetrius want an honest coloure, pretending the worship of Diana.

But the matter it selfe doeth plainly declare, that they fight not so much for the altars as for the fires: to wit, that they may haue hot kitchenings. They can well winke at filthie Blasphemies against God, so they lacke nothing of their reuenues, Onely they are more than courageous in maintaining such superstitions as are meetest for their purpose.

Therefore

Therefore being taught by such examples, let vs learn to make choise of such a kind of life as is agreeable to the doctrine of Christ: least desire of gaine prouoke vs to enter a wicked and vngodly combate: and as for those who through ignorance or error are fallen vnto any vngodly occupation, or are intangled in any other impure and wicked kind of life: let them notwithstanding beware of such sacrilegious rashnes. And as touching godly teachers, let them learn by this example, that they shall neuer want aduersaries, vntill the whole world through deniall of it self offer peace: which we know will neuer come to passe. Because Pauls doctrine taketh away Demetrius and the rest of the siluer smithes gaires, they leape out furiously to put out the same, will not they doe the same, whom the Gospell shall contrary? But there is no man who hath not occasion to fight. For all the affections of the fleshe are enemies to God. So that it must needs be, that how many lusts of the fleshe there be in the world: there are as many armed enemies to resist Christ. It will in deede oftentimes fall out that God will bridle the wicked, least they raise some tumult, or breake out into open rage. Yet whosoeuer is not tamed, and brought downe to beare Christes yoke, he shall alwaies hate his gospel. So that faithfull & godly teachers must persuaade themselves that they shall alwayes haue to deale with great store of enemies. Demetrius his couetousnes is manifest. Neuertheless we must also know this, that he was Satan his son, who seeking by all means to ouerthrow Pauls doctrine, found this fit instrument. Now forasmuch as we know that Satan is a deadly enemy to Christ and the truth, do we thinke that hee shall euer want ministers, who shall rage through his motion and persuation, either with open rage, or els seek to worke the ouerthrow of the Gospell by secret practises, or spue out the poyson of their hatred, or els at least shew some token of enmitie by fretting and murmuring.

25 *By this craft.* Demetrius doeth in this place filthily bewray his malice. It is lawfull for a man in some measure to prouide for his private profite: but to trouble common peace for a mans owne gaine, to ouerthrow equitie and right, to giue ouer a mans self, to do violence & commit murder, to extinguish that of set purpose which is iust and right: that is too great wickednes. Demetrius confesseth that this is the state of the cause, because Paul denieth that those are Gods which are made with mens hands. He doth not inquire whether this be true or no: but being blinded with a desire to get gain, he is carried headlong to oppresse true doctrine. The same blindness doth driue him headlong to seek violent remedies. Also the craftie men, because they be afraid of pouertie and hunger, run headlong as violently, for the belly is blind and deaf, so that it can adme no equitie. For which cause euery one of vs ought more to suspect himselfe, when the question is touching our owne gaine & profite, least the same couetous desire which made these men so mad, take away all difference of iustice and vniustice, of that which is filthie and that which is honest.

27 *Not only this part.* This is first disorderedly handled in that Demetrius is carefull for religion after other things: because nothing

is more absurd then to prefer the belly before the goddess: but eue this is also vain, in that he pretendeth that the worship of Diana is in hazard. For if he had suffered no losse by Paul his doctrine he would haue sit quietly at home: hee would neither haue taken thought for the worship of Diana, neither would he haue troubled others. What is the cause then he is so diligent and so earnest in his businesse, euen this, because he was plagued at home? and because he saw that hee and his copartners had no honest or probable cause to make any stirre, he goeth about to colour the matter with some other colour. Therefore to the end hee may couer the shame of his wicked fact, he cloketh it with the title of religio, which is plausible. So that the wicked howsoeuer they strue stowardly against God, yet they gather heere and there honest excuses impudently: but God doth not suffer himselfe to be mocked: but doeth rather pull them out of their starting holes. There needeth no other witness to refute Demetrius his hypocrisie: because he cutteth his owne throate with his owne words, when he bewrayeth the sorow which he had conceiued, because of the losse, which he susteined. In like state do the papists stand at this day: they boast with full mouth, that they be patrons of the catholike faith, & of the holy mother the church, but when they haue spoke thus touching their zeale, in the very handling of the cause they breath out with wide open throte the smel of their kitchins. But if we haue a desire to handle the cause of godlines purely and in earnest, let vs forget our commodities, that the glory of God may haue the chief place. For the shew of profite doth so tie all our senses with inticements, that though wee wander through all manner wickednesse, yet doe wee flatter our selues, so long as wee bee determined to provide for our owne commoditie.

Whom all Asia and the world doth worship. It seemeth to Demetrius an vnmeet thing that Diana her maiestie should bee brought to naught, which all the world doth reuerence and worship, and this is a common starting hole for all superstitious persons, to pretend the consent of the multitude. But true religion requireth a more stedfast stay then in the will and pleasure of men. There is nothing which at this day doth more keepe backe the simple and vnskilfull, then that they dare not cast from them such ancient errors as are commonly receiued euery where. Because they feigne and imagine that that which pleased many though foolishly and rashly, is to be counted lawful. For which cause they be not afraide boldly to set the very name of custome against God himselfe. But the Lord doth prescribe to vs another maner of rule, to wit, that being content with his authoritie alone, we doe not passe either for the opinion of men, nor for our owne commoditie, nor for the custome of many nations.

29. *And all the citie was full of confusion. And they rushed into the comon place with one consent, hauing caught Gains, and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul his companions.*

30. *And*

- 30 And when Paul would have entred in vnto the people, the disciples would not suffer him.
- 31 And certain also of the chiefe of Asia which were his friends sent vnto him, requesting him that he would not enter into the common place.
- 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assemblie was out of order, and the more part knew not for what cause they came together.
- 33 And some of the companie drew forth Alexander, the Iewes thrusting him forward. And when Alexander had required silence with the hande, he would haue excused the matter to the people.
- 34 Whom when they knew to be a Iew, there arose a shout of all men almost for the space of two houres, crying, great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 Luke setteth downe in this place the nature of the people, as if it were depainted in a table. Like as if a thousand houses should be set on fire at a sodaine: so all the Citie was on an vprore in one moment: and when such a tempest is once raised, it is not easily stayed. And forasmuch as the seruants of Christ cannot auoid this mischiefe, they must be armed with inuincible constancie, that they may boldly suffer the tumults raised among the people, and that they may not bee troubled as with some new and strange matter, when they see that the people is vnquiet. So Paul himself doth elsewhere triumph that he went valiantly through the midst of sedition. Neuerthelesse the Lord doeth vpholde the ministers of his word with an excellent comfort, when as they be tossed amidst diuerse stormes and garboyles, and with excellent boldnesse doeth hee establish them, when he doth testifie that he holdeth the helme of his Church: and not that onely, but that he is the gouernour and moderator of all tumults and stormes, so that hee can stay the same so soone as it seemeth good to him. Therefore let vs know that we must saile as it were in a tempestuous sea: yet that we must suffer this infamie, as if wee our selues were the procurers of trouble: neither may any thing leade vs away from the right course of our duetic. So that in sailing wee shall be sore troubled: yet will not the Lord suffer vs to suffer shipwrack. Furthermore we see that though sedition bee confused, yet doeth the people alwayes take the worse part: as the men of Ephesus do now catch Gaius and Aristarchus, and they driue backe Alexander with their furious outcries. Whence commeth this, saue onely because Satan doth reigne in their hearts, so that they rather fauour an euill cause? There is also another reason, because a preiudice conceiued vpon a false report doth possesse their mindes, so that they cannot abide to sift the cause any farther.

2. Cor. 6. 9.

30 And when Paul would. Wee may see that Paule his constancie was coupled with modestie. When as hee might well haue kept himselfe out of sight, of his owne accorde was hee prepared to put himselfe in hazard. And yet hee doeth not refuse to followe their counsell, who knewe the state of matters better than hee. If he had not beene kept backe, that which hee determined to doe, could not haue beene im-

puted to rashnesse. There was no sedition raised through his fault: why should hee venture his life? especiallie seeing that hee did not despaire of better successe. But when the brethren and such friends as were more skilfull diswade him, his modestie is worthie to be commended, in that he doth not stand stoutly in his purpose.

33 *They drew out Alexander.* It is to bee thought that the Iewes did not sende forth this Alexander to pleade the common cause of the nation: but that they were desirous to bring him before the people, that he might be murthered. Neuerthelesse the name Iewe made him to be so hated that they did outrageously refuse whatsoeuer hee was about to speake in the matter and cause: yea he did hardly scape with his life in such an vprore. Moreouer it is vncertaine whether this bee that Alexander of whom Paule maketh mention elsewhere: yet the coniecture seemeth to mee allowable. But and if wee beleue that it is hee, let vs learn by this fearefull example to walke circumspectlie, least Sathan carrie vs away into like falling away. For wee see that hee who was, at the point to suffer martyrdom, became a trecherous and wicked reuolt.

1. Tim. 1.20

& 2. Tim. 4.

14. hee, let vs learn by this fearefull example to walke circumspectlie, least Sathan carrie vs away into like falling away. For wee see that hee who was, at the point to suffer martyrdom, became a trecherous and wicked reuolt.

34 *Greet is Diana of the Ephesians.* This was a clamorous confession, but without any soundnesse, neither did it proceede from the faith of the heart. For whence came that great diuinitie of Diana whereof they spake, saue onely because like madde men they furiously defende that errour which they had once receiued? It fareth otherwise with true godlinesse: that wee beleue with the heart vnto righteopnesse, and then doeth the confession of the mouth follow to saluation. Therein doeth the distemperature and madde stubbornnesse of all madde men and brainesicke fooles differ from the constancie and zeale of the martyrs. And yet notwithstanding our sluggishnesse is shamefull, if we be not as readie and stout in the confession of a sure faith as are they in their filthie errour. For wee see what the Spirit of God prescribeth vnto vs by the mouth of Dauid, I beleueed, and therefore will I speake.

Psal. 106.10

35 And when the towne clarke had pacified the multitude, he saide, Yee men of Ephesus, what man is he that knoweth not that the Citie of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddesse Diana, and of the image that came down from Iupiter.

36 And seeing these things are out of question, you must bee quiet, and doe nothing rashly.

37 For yee haue brought men which are neither Churchrabbers, nor yet blasphemers of your goddesse.

38 But and if Demetrius and the crafts-men that are with him, haue a matter against any man, there be open assemblies, and there be deputies, let them accuse one another.

39 But and if there be any other matter in question, it shalbe decided in a lawfull assembly.

40 For it is to bee doubted least wee be accused of this dayes sedition, seeing there

there is no cause whereby we may give a reason of this concourse. And when he had thus spoken, he let the assembly depart.

35 Luke sheweth in this place that the tumult was so appeased that yet notwithstanding superstition preuailed with the, madde people, and the truth of God was not heard. For the town clarke, as politike mé use to dó, counteth it sufficient for him if he can by any meanes appease the outrageous multitude. Neuerthelesse the cause it selfe is oppressed. He saw vndoubtedly Demetrius his malice, and howe hee had troubled the citie, abusing the pretence of religion for his owne priuate gain: but he toucheth not that wound which he knew to be vnknownen to the vnskilful. Neuerthelesse to the end he may stay the vproare & contention, he extolleth the feigned power of Diana, & maintaineth her superstitious worship. If Paul had been in the common place at that time, hee would rather haue suffered death an hundreth times, then haue suffered himselfe to be deliuered from daunger paying so deare for it. For thogh the towne clarke had not been by him commaunded to speake thus: yet it should haue been treacherous dissimulation in a publike witnessse and preacher of heauenly doctrine. The Scribe affirmeth that the Image which the Ephesians did worship came downe from heauen, and that Paul and his companions spake no blasphemie against their goddess. Could he haue holden his peace, but he must needs by his silence haue allowed his false excuse? And this had been to shake hands with idolatry: Therefore it was not without cause that Luke said before that Paul was kept backe by the brethren: and not suffered to enter into the common place.

37 Men which are neither church robbers. Hee doeth both truly and well denie that they be churchrobbers: but he doth shortly after falslie define the kinde of churchrobberie, to speake blasphemously against Diana. For seeing that all superstition is profane and polluted, it followeth that those be sacrilegious persons who translate the honour which is due to God alone, vnto Idols. But the wisdomé of the towne clarke, and that carnall, is heere commended, and not his godlinesse. For hee had respect vnto this alone, to extinguish the hear of the vprore: & therefore doth he at length conclude, if Demetrius haue any priuate matter, there be iudgement seates and Magistrates. And that publike affayres must be handeled in a lawfull and not in a disordered assemblie: in an assembly gathered by the commaundement of the magistrates, and not in a concourse which is without consideration, funne together through the motion of one man, and to satisfie his appetite. He calleth them deputies in the plurall number, not that Asia had more then one, but because Legates did sometimes keep courtes in the place of the deputies. Also he appeaseth them by putting them in feare, because the deputie had occasion offered to punish and fine the citie sore.

CHAP. XX.

- 1 **A**ND after the tumult was ceased, when Paul had called vnto him the disciples, and had embraced them, he tooke his journey that hee might goe into Macedonia.
- 2 And when he had walked through those partes, and had with much speech exhorted them, he came into Grecia.
- 3 And when he had spent thre monethes there, when the Iewes laid in wait for him as he was about to loose into Syria: he purposed to returne through Macedonia.
- 4 And there accompanied him vnto Asia, Sopater of Berrheia: and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Caius of Derbie, and Timotheus: and of Asia, Tichichus and Trophimus.
- 5 When these were gone before, they stayed for vs at Troas.
- 6 And we sailed away after the day of sweet bread from Philippi, and came to them to Troas within fise dayes, where we staid seuen daies.

1 Luke. declareth in this chapter how Paul loosing from Asia, did againe crosse the Seas to goe to Ierusalem. And though whatsoeuer is written in this narration bee worthie of most diligent meditation and marking; yet doth it need no long exposition. It appeareth that the church was preserued in fastie by the wonderfull power of God amidst those troublesome tumults. The church of Ephesus was as yet slender & weake: the faithfull hauing had experience of a sodaine motion oncé, might for iust causes feare, least like stormes should euer now and then arise. We need not doubt that Paul did with much ado depart from the; yet because greater necessitie doth draw him vnto another place, hee is enforced to leaue his sonnies who were lately begotten and had as yet scarce escaped shipwracke, in the midst of the raging Sea. As for them though they be very loth to forgo Paul, yet least they do iniurie to other churches, they do not keepe him back nor stay him. So that wee see that they were not wedded to themselves, but that they were carefull for the kingdome of Christ, that they might prouide as well for their brethren as for themselves. We must diligently note these examples, that one of vs may studie to help another in this miserable disappearing; but if it so fall out at any time that we be bereft of profitable helps, let vs not doubt nor wauer, knowing that God doth hold the helme of our ship. And we must also note this that Paul doth not depart vntill he haue saluted the Brethren, but doth rather strengthen them at his departure. As Luke sayeth straightway of the Macedonians, that Paul exhorted them with many wordes: that is not ouerfieldes, as if it were sufficient to put them onely in minde of their dutie: but as he commaundeth els where that others shoulde doe, hee vrge importunately and beate in throughly; things which were needfull to bee knowen: that they might neuer bee forgotten.

A. Tim. 4. 2.

- 3 Because the Iewes laid wait for him. The Lord did exercise his seruante so diuersly and continually, that hee set before vs in him an example of

of most excellent constancy. It is not sufficient for him to be wearied with the labour and trouble of a long and wearisome journey, yns he be also brought in danger of his life by those which lay in waite for him. Let all the seruants of Christe set this mirror before their eyes, that they may neuer faint through the wearisomnes of straits. Notwithstanding when Paul doth journey another way that he may auoid their laying in wait, he sheweth that we must haue regard of our life so farre forth, that wee throw not our selues headlong into the midst of dangers. And those who accompanie him, giue no smal testimonie of their godlines: and we see how precious his life was to the faithful, when as a great many beeyng chosen out of diuers countries to be his companions, do for his sake take a hard & sharp journey, not without great charges. Luke saith that Paul tarried at Philippos so long as the daies of vnleauened bread did last, because he had at that time better opportunitie offered to teach, And for as much as it was vnkown as yet that the law was disanulled, it stood him vpo to beware least by neglecting the feast day, he should be thought among the rude to be a contemner of God. Though for mine owne part I thinke that he sought principally opportunity to teache, because the Jewes were then more attentiu to learne.

7 And vpon one day of the Sabbothes when the disciples were come together to breake bread, Paul disputed with them, being about to take his iourney, on the morrow: and he prolonged his speech vntil midnight.

8 And there were manie lightes in an upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And a certaine young man named Eutichus sitting in a window, being fallen into a deepe sleepe, as Paul disputed long time, being more overcome with sleep, he fel down from the third loft downward, and was taken vp dead.

10 And when Paul came downe, he fel vpon him, & embracing him said, Be not yee troubled, for his soule is in him.

11 And when he was gone vp, and had broken bread, and had eaten, hauing had long conference vntill it was day, he departed.

12 And they brought the boy aliue, and were not a litle comforted.

13 But when we had taken ship, we loosed to Asson, thence to receiue Paule, for so had he appointed, being about to goe by land.

7 And in one day: Either doth he meane the first day of the weeke, which was next after the Sabbooth, or els some certaine Sabbooth. Which latter thing may seeme to me more probable: for this cause because that daye was more fit for an assëbly, according to custome. But seeing it is no new matter for the Euangelists to put, one, instead of the first, according to the custome of the Hiebrew tongue, it shal very wel agree, that on the morrow after the Sabbooth, they came together. Furthermore, it were too cold to expōid this of any day. For to what end is there mentioned of the Sabbooth, saue only that he may note the opportunity & choise of the time? Also it is a likely matter that Paul waited for the sabbooth, that the day before his departure, he might the more easily gather al the disc-

ciple:

Mat. 26. 1.

Luk. 24. 1.

Ioh. 20. 1.

ciples into one place, And the zeale of them al is woorth the noting, in that it was no trouble to Paul to teach vntil midnight, though he were ready to take his iourney, neyther were the rest weary of learning. For he had no other cause to continue his speech so long saue onely the desire and attentiuenes of his auditory.

To breake bread. Though breaking of bread doth sometimes signifie among the Hebrewes a domestical banquet: yet do I expound the same of the holi^s supper in this place, being moued with two reasons. For seeing we may easily gather by that which foloweth, that ther was no smal multitude gathered together there: it is vnlikely that there could any supper be prepared in a priuate house. Again Luke wil afterward declare that Paul tooke bread, not at supper time, but after midnight. Herevnto is added that, that he saith not that he tooke meate that he might eate, but that he might onlie tast. Therefore I thinke thus, that they had appointed a solemun day for the celebrating of the holy supper of the Lord among themselues, which might be commodious for them all. And to the end Paul might remedy after a sort the silence of longer absence, he continueth his speech longer then he did commonly vse to doe. That which I spake of the great number of men is gathered thence, because there were many lights in the vpper chamber: which was not done for anie pompe or ostentation, but only for necessities sake. For when there is no need, it is ambition & vanitie which maketh men bestow cost. Furthermore it was meet that all the whole place should shyne with lights least that holy company might be suspected of some wickednes or dishonestie: adde also another coniecture, if the chamber had bin emptye, those which were present would not haue suffered Eutichus to sit vpo a window. For it had bin filthy licenciousnes in despising the heauely doctrine, to depart aside into a widow, seeing ther was room inough elsewhere.

9 When he was fallen into a deepe sleepe. I see no cause why some interpreters shuld so sore & sharply conden the drouisines of the yong mā, that they should say that he was punished for his sluggishnes by death. For what maruell is it, if seeing the nighte was so farre spent, hauing striuen so long with sleepe, he yeelded at length? And whereas against his will and otherwise then he hoped for, hee was taken and ouercome with deepe sleepe, we may guesse by this that he did not settle himselfe to sleepe. To seeke out a fit place wherein to sleep, had bin a signe of sluggishnes, but to be ouercome with sleepe, sitting at a window, what other thing is it, but without fault to yeelde to nature? As if a man should faint through hunger or too much wearisomnes. Those who being drowned in earthly cares come vnto the word lothsomly: those who being full of meate and wine, are thereby brought on sleepe: those who are vigilant ynough in other matters, but heare the woord as though they did not passe for it, shalbe iustly condemned for drouisines: but Luke doth in plaine words acquit Eutichus, when he saith that he fel downe, being ouercome with deepe sleepe after midnight. Moreouer, the Lord me^t not only by the sleep, but also by the death of this yong man to awake & stir vp the faith of his, that they might more ioufully

joyfully receiue Paul his doctrine & might keep it deeply rooted in their minds. It was in deed at the first no small temptation, but such as might haue shaken euen a most constant man full sore, for who would haue thought that Christ had bin chiefe gouernor in that company, wherein a miserable mā through a fall became dead? Who would not rather haue thought this to be a signe of Gods curse? But the Lord by applying a remedie, doth forthwith rid the minds of his of all perturbation.

10 *He lay downe vpon him.* We know that the Apostles in working miracles did sometimes vse certaine externall rites, whereby they might giue the glorie to God the authour. And now whereas Paul doeth stretch himselfe vpon the young man, I thinke it was done to no other end, saue onely that he might more stirre vp himselfe vnto prayer. It is all one as if he should mixe himselfe with the dead man. And peraduenture this was done for the imitation of Elizeus, of whom the sacred historie doth report the same thing. Yet the vehemencie of his affection did more moue him, than the emulation of the Prophet. For that stretching of himselfe vpon him, doeth more prouoke him to craue his life with all his heart, at the handes of the Lorde. So when he embraced the bodie of the dead man, by this gesture he declared that hee offered it to God to be quickned, and out of the text wee may gather that hee did not depart from embracing it, vntill he knew that the life was restored againe.

See yee not troubled. We must note that Paul tooke great care principally for this cause, least that sorrowfull euent should shake the faith of the godlie, and should trouble their mindes. Neuertheless the Lorde did as it were seale vp & establishe that last Sermon, which Paul made at Troas, when he sayeth, that his soule is in him, hee doeth not denie that he was dead, because by this meanes he should extinguish the glorie of the miracle: but the meaning of these wordes is, that his life was restored through the grace of God. I doe not restraine that which followeth, to wit, that they were greatly comforted vnto the ioy which they had by reason of the young man which was restored to life: but I do also comprehend the confirmation of faith, seeing God gaue them such an excellent testimony of his loue.

13 *When wee had taken shippe.* It is vncertain why Paul did choos rather to goe by lande: whether it were because sayling might be to him troublesome, or that as he did passe by hee might visite the brethren. I thinke that hee did then eschew the seas for his heathes sake. And his curtesie is greatly to bee commended, in that he spared his companions. For to what end, did hee suffer them to depart, saue onelie that hee might ease them of the trouble? So that we see that they did sturue among them selues in curtesie and good turnes. They were ready and willing to doe their ducie; but Paul was so farre from requiring thinges strictly at their handes, that of his owne accord and curteously he did remit those ducies which they were readie to doe: yea setting aside his own comodity he comaded them to do that which was for their comfort. It is well known that the citie Asson is by the

describers of countries attributed to Troas. The same as Plinie doeth witness was called Appolonia. They say that it was a free Citie of the *Aeolianes*.

14 And when we were come together at Asson, hauing receiued him we came to Mitylenes.

15 And sailing thence the day following we came ouer against Chios: and on the morrow we arrived at Samos, and hauing tarried at Trogyllium we came to Miletum.

16 For Paul purposed to saile beyond Ephesus, least he should spend the time in Asia. For he made hast if it were possible for him, to keepe the day of Pentecost at Ierusalem.

17 And hauing sent messengers from miletum to Ephesus; he called the Elders of the Church.

18 Who when they were come to him, he said vnto them, Yee know from the first day wherein I entred into Asia, how I haue bin with you at all seasons.

19 Seruing the Lord with all humilitie of minde, & with many teares & temptations, which hapned to me by the laying in wait of the Iewes;

20 So that I haue kept nothing back which might bee for your profite, but did shew to you and teach you publicly and through euery house;

21 Testifying both to the Iewes and Grecians the repentance which is toward God, and the faith which is toward our Lord Iesus Christ.

16 For Paul purposed. It is not to be doubted but that he had great & weightie causes to make hast: not that he made so great account of the day, but because strangers did the vs to come together to Ierusalem out of all quarters. Forasmuch as he did hope that he might doe som good in such a great assembly, he would not foresew the opportunitie. Therefore let vs know that the worship of the law was nor the cause that he made so great hast: but he set before his eyes the edifying of the church: partly that he might shew to the faithfull that the kingdome of Christ was enlarged, partly that if there were any as yet strangers from Christ, hee might gaine them: partly that he might stoppe the mouths of the wicked. Notwithstanding we must note, that he did in the meane season provide for other churches. For in sending for the elders of Ephesus to Miletum, he sheweth that he did not neglect Asia. And whereas they come together when they be called, it is not only a token of concord, but also of modestie. For they were manie: yet doeth it not like them to obey one Apostle of Christ, whome they knewe to bee indued with singular gifts. Moreover it appereth more plainly by the text, that those are called elders, not which were gray headed, but such as were rulers of the Church. And it is an vsual thing almost in all tongues, that those be called elders & fathers, who are appointed to gouern others, though their age be not alwaies according.

18 Yee knowe. Paul in this sermon standeth principally vpon this, that he may exhort those pastours of Ephesus, by his owne example, to doe their duty faithfully. For that is the chief kinde of censure, and by this

meanes

meanes is authority purchased to doctrine, whē the teacher prescribeth nothing, which he himselfe hath not done indeed before; And it was no vnseemly thing for Paul to speake of his vertues. There is nothing lesse tollerable in the seruantes of Christ then ambytion and vanity: but for as much as all men knew full well what modestie and humility was in the holie man, hee needed not to feare least he shoulde incurre the suspition of vayne boasting: especially seeing that beyng enforced by necessitie, he did declare his faithfulness and diligence, that o-ther might take example thereby. He doth in deede greatly extoll his labours, patience, fortitude, and other vertues, but to what ende? Surely not that he may purchase commendation at the hands of his auditory, but that his holy exhortation may pearce more deeply, and may sticke fast in their myndes. He did also shoote at another marke, that his integritie and vprightnesse in dealing, might serue afterward to commend his doctrine. And he citeth eie witnesses, least he seem to speake of things vnknown. I call those witnesses, who did not only know all things: but had also a iudgement which was pure, and corrupt with no affections.

19) *Seruing the Lord.* He reckoneth vp first not onely in what straites he was, but most of all his humilitie coupled with contēpt of the world, and rebukes, and other afflictions: as if he should say, that he was not honourably receiued or with commendation: but he was conuersant among them vnder the contemptible form of the crosse. And this is no smal trial, when we faint not, though we see our selues troden vnder foot by the intollerable pride of the world.

Notwithstanding we must note euery thing more distinctly. To serue the Lord is taken in this place, not for to worshipping God in holines and righteousness, which is common to all the godlie. But it doth signifie to execute a publike function. Therefore Paul doeth not speake of some one priuate man: but as one made a minister of the Church. And so he doth testifie that hee fulfilled the Apostleship: to him committed with humilitie and modestie: both because knowing his owne infirmities, he did mistrust himselfe: and also because considering the excellencie of his calling, he counted him selfe verie vnmeet: and lastly, because he did willingly submit him selfe to beate the reproch of the Crosse. For this humilitie is set both against vaine confidence, and also hawtinesse. Secondly, he toucheth his teares, which strifes, diuers assaults of Saran, the rage of wicked men, the inward diseases of the Church; and offences had made him shedde: at length he addeth that hee ledde a fearefull life, amidst the layinges in wayte of the Iewes: and he confesseth that he was tempted therewith, as hee was not hardened though he did not faint. For he is not ashamed to confesse his infirmities. His drift is, that those to whom he speaketh may not faint through like tribulations, and that beyng voide of all ambition, they may doe their duetie carefully and reuerently. And that they may not onelie with a pacient minde, suffer them selues to bee despy- sed of men, but that they may be cast downe in them selues: because
that

that man can neuer be rightly framed to obey Christ, whose lookes are lustie, and whose heart is proude. And (as men cannot long beare a shewe of vertue) to the ende it may appeare manifestly, that he behaued hym selfe sincerely and from his hearte; he maketh mention of his constancie which lasted three yeeres, wherein he had stil kept one course. Yee knowe (sayeth hee) howe I haue behaued my selfe since the first daye vntill this time. To conclude, this is the true tryall of the seruantes of Christe, not to bee chaunged as the tymes change; but to continue like to themselves; & alwayes to keep a streight course.

20. *I haue kepte backe nothing.* He commendeth his faithfulness and diligence in teaching in three respectes, that hee instructed his schollers thoroughly and perfectly, so that he omitted nothing whiche might make for their saluation: that beyng not content with generall preaching, he did also indeuour to doe every man good. Thirdly, he reciteth a brieve summe of all his whole doctrine, that hee exhorted them vnto faith in Christ and repentaunce. Now for as much as he depaynteth out vnto vs a patterne of a faithfull & good Teacher: whosoever they be who are desirous to prooue their industrie to the Lorde, they must set before their eyes the edifying of the Church: as he commaundeth Timotheus in another place, to consider what thinges be profitable; that he may bee instant in deliuering those thinges. And surely the Scripture (according to whose rule all manner of teaching must be examined, yea which is the onelie method of teaching right) doth not containe profound speculations, to delight men when they haue nothing els to doe: but as the same Paul doth testifie, it is all profitable to make the man of God perfect. But Paul prescribeth such a desire to edifie, that the Pastour must omit nothing, so much as in him lieth, which is profitable to be knowne. For they be bad maisters who doe so keepe their schollers in the first principles, that they doe neuer come vnto the knowledge of the truth. And surely the Lorde doth not teach vs in his woorde onelie to halfe (as they say) but he deliuereth perfect wisdom and such as is in all pointes absolute: whereby it appeareth hoive impudently those menne boast them selues to be ministers of the worde, who doe not onely cloake and foster the ignorance of the people wyth their silence, but doe also winke at grosse errors and wicked superstitions: as at this day in Papistrie, many send out some sparkles of sound doctrine, but they dare not drive away the darknesse of ignorance, and where as the wicked feare of the flesh doth hinder them, they pretende that the people is not capable of sound doctrine.

Indeed I confesse that all things cannot be taught at one time, and that we must imitate Paul his wisdom, who did apply himselfe vnto the capacite of the ignorant. But what moderation is this, when they suffer the blinde to fall into the ditch; when they leaue myserable soules vnder the tyranny of Antichrist; and whereas they see Idolatrie,

legitimate, but that they may be cast down in their toils: because

rage, the worship of God corrupt, his Lawe broken, and finally all holie things prophaned; they doe either with silence passe ouer such filthie confusion, or else they shewit vnder hand sparingly and obscurelie like men that be a fraid? Therefore we must note Paul his word, when as he saith that he kept backe nothing, but did shew whatsoeuer things were profitable for the people: for by this wee gather that the pure and free profession of sounde doctrine is required at the hands of the seruants of Christ, wherein there must be no boughts nor crooks, and that nothing is more vnseemely in them than oblique insinuations, and such as are inwrapped in crafty dissimulation.

Publikelie and through out euery house. This is the seconde point, that hee did not onely teach all men in the congregation, but also euery one priuately, as euery mans necessitie did require. For Christ hath not appointed Pastours vppon this condition; that they may onely teach the Church in generall in the open pulpit: but that they may take charge of euery particular sheepe, that they may bring backe to the sheepfold those which wander and goe astray; that they may strengthen those which are discouraged and weake; that they may cure the sick, that they may lift vppe and set on foote the feeble: for common doctrine will oftentimes waxe colde, vnlesse it bee holpen with priuate admonitions.

Eze. 344

Wherefore the negligence of those men is inexcuseable who hauing made one Sermon, as if they had done their task liue all the rest of their time idly: as if their voice were shut vp within the church walles, seing that so soone as they be departed thence they be dumbe. Also disciples and scholers are taught, that if they will be numbred in Christes flocke, they must giue place to their pastours, so often as they come vnto them: and that they must not refuse priuate admonitions. For they bee rather Beares then sheepe, who do not vouchsafe to heare the voice of their pastour vnlesse he bee in the pulpit: and cannot abide to bee admonished and reprovned at home, yea, doe furiously refuse that necessarie dutie.

21 *Testifying both to Iewes.* Descending nowe vnto the thyrde poynt, he setteth downe the summe of this doctrine in a fewe words, to witte, that he exhorted all menne vnto faith and repentaunce, as it was sayde before, that, The Gospell consisteth vpon these two points onely. Whence wee doe also gather, wherein the true edifying of the Church, doth properly consist, the care and burthen whereof doeth lie vppon the Pastours shoulders, and whereto wee must applie all our studie, if wee be desirous to profite profitably in Gods schoole. We haue already saide, that the worde of God is profaned, when the readers of the same doe occupie themselues in friuolous questions. But to the end we may not reade the same wandringly, we must note & aime at this double mark which the Apostle setteth before vs. For whosoever he be that turneth vnto anie other thing, in taking greate paynes, hee shall doe nothing else but walke in a circuite. By the worde Testifie he expresseth greater yehemencie, as if he shoulde haue sayde, that
by

by testifying he did commend, that the excuse of ignorance might not remaine. For he alludeth vnto the custome vsed in Courts: where testifying is vsed to take away all doubt. As men are not onely to be taught, but also to be constrained, to embrace saluation in Christ, and to addict themselves to God to leade a new life. And though he affirme that hee was wanting to none, yet doth he place the Iewes in the first place: because as the Lord had preferred them in the degree of honor before the Gentiles, so it was meete that Christ and his grace shoulde bee offered them vntill they should quite fall away.

Repentance toward God. We must first note the distinction of faith and Repentance, which some doe falsely and vnskilfully confounde, saying that repentance is a part of faith. I grant in deede that they cannot bee separte: because God doth illuminate no man with the Spirit of faith, whom he doth not also regenerate vnto newnesse of life. Yet they must needs be distinguished as Paul doth in this place. For Repentance is a turning vnto God, when wee frame our selues and all our life to obey him: but faith is a receiuing of the grace offered vs in Christ. For all religion tendeth to this end that imbracing holinesse and righteousnes, we serue the Lord purely, also that wee seeke no part of our saluation any where els saue only at his hands: and that we seek saluation in Christ alone. Therefore the doctrine of repentance containeth a rule of good life, it requireth the deniall of our selues, the mortifying of our flesh, and meditating vpon the heauenly life. But because we be all naturally corrupt, strangers from righteousnesse, and turned away from God himselfe againe, because we flie from God, because we know that he is displeased with vs: the meanes as well to obtaine free reconciliation, as newnesse of life must be set before vs. Therefore vnlesse fath be added, it is in vain to speake of repentance: yea those teachers of repentance, who neglecting faith, stand only vpon the framing of life, & precepts of good works, differ nothing or very little from profane Philosophers. They teach how men must liue, but forasmuch as they leaue men in their nature, there can no bettering be hoped for thence, vntill they inuite those who are lost vnto hope of saluation, vntill they quicken the dead, promising forgiveness of sinnes, vntill they shewe that God doth by his free adoption take those for his children, who were before bondslaves of Satan, vntill they teach that the spirit of regeneration must be begged at the hands of the heauenly father, that we must draw godlines, righteousnes, & goodness from him who is the fountaine of all good things. And here vpon followeth calling vpon God, which is the chiefeft thing in the worshipping of God. We see now how that repentance and faith are so linked together, that they cannot be separte. For it is faith which reconcileth God to vs, not only that he may be fauorable vnto vs, by acquiring vs of the guiltines of death, by not imputing to vs our sinnes: but also that by purging the filthinesse of our flesh by his spirit, hee may fashion vs again after his owne image. He doth not therefore name repentance in the former place, as if it did wholly goe before faith, for as much as a part thereof proceedeth from faith, and is an effect thereof: but because the beginning

ginning of repentance, is a preparation vnto faith. I call the displeasing of our selues the beginning, which doth inforce vs, after we bee thoroughly touched with the feare of the wrath of God, to seeke some remedie.

Faith toward Christ. It is not without cause that the scripture doeth euery where make Christ the marke whereat our faith must ayme, and as they say commonly, set him before vs as the object. For the maiesty of God is of it self higher then that men can climb thervnto. Therefore vnlesse Christ come between, al our senses do vanish away in seeking God. Again, in as much as he is the iudge of the world, it must needes bee that the beholding of him without Christ, shal make vs afraid. But God doth not only represent himself vnto vs in Christ his image: but also refresh vs with his fatherly fauour, & by al meanes restore vs to life. For there is no part of our saluation, which may not bee found in Christ. By the sacrifice of his death he hath purged our sins: hee hath suffered the punishment that he might acquit vs: he hath made vs cleane by his blood: by his obedience he hath appeased his fathers wrath: by his resurrection he hath purchased righteounes for vs. No maruel therefore if we sayd, that faith must be fixed in the beholding of Christ.

22 And behold I goe now bounde in the spirit to Ierusalem, not knowing what things shall befall me there.

23 Saue onely that the holy Ghost doth witness throughout euery citie, saying that bonds and afflictions are prepared for me.

24 But I care not, neither is my life deare to me, that I maye finishe my course with ioye, and the minister which I haue receiued of the Lord Iesus to testifie the Gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now behold I know that after this ye shall not see my face, al you through whom I haue gone preaching the kingdome of God.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this daye, that I am cleane from the blood of all men.

27 For I haue kepte nothing backe, but haue shewed you all the counsell of God.

28 And behold. He declareth now more fully to what end hee intreated of his ypright dealing: to wit, because they should neuer see him any more. And it was very expedient, that the patterne which was set before them by God, of them to be followed, shuld be alwayes before their eyes, & that they should remember him when he was dead. For we know how readily men degenerate from pure institution. But thought hee deny that he doth know what shall befall him at Ierusalem, yet because hee was taught by many prophecies, that bods were prepared for him there as if he were now readie to die, he cutteth off shortly after the hope of his returne. And yet for all this he is not contrarie to him selfe. Hee speaketh doubtfully at the first of set purpose, that hee maye soften that which was about to be more hard & bitter: & yet he doth truly affirm, that he knew not as yet the ends & euents of things: because he had

no certain and special reuelation touching the whole proceſſe.

Bound in the ſpirit. Some expound this that he was bound to the churches, who had committed to him this function to carry almes. Notwithſtanding, I doe rather thinke, that hereby is meant the inward force and motion of the ſpirit: not as though he were ſo inſpired, that he was out of his witte: but becauſe being certiſied of the will of God, he did meekely follow the direction and inſtinct of the ſpirit, euen of his owne accord. Therefore this ſpeech importeth as much as if he ſhoulde haue ſaide, I cannot otherwiſe doe, vnleſſe I would be ſtubborne and rebellious againſt God, who doth as it were draw me thither, being bounde by his ſpirit. For to the end he may excuſe himſelf of raſhnes, he ſaith that the ſpirit is the authour & guide of his journey. But woulde to God thoſe brainſick men, who boalt that the ſpirit doth indite to theſe thoſe things which proceed from their own fantaſie, did know the ſpirit as familiarly as did Paul, who doth notwithstanding not ſay that al his motions and inſtigations are of the ſpirit, but declareth that that fel out in one thing as a ſinguler thing. For men do oftentimes fooliſhly & vnaduiſedly take in hande thoſe things, which they put in praſtiſe afterwarde ſtoutly, becauſe they be aſhamed of lightnes and vnſtabilitie. And he doth not onely meane that he tooke in hand his journey for a good cauſe which the ſpirit of god ſheweth him: but that it is altogether neceſſary for him, becauſe it is wickednes to reſiſt. Furthermore, let vs learne by the example of the holy man, not to kick againſt the ſpirit of the Lord, but obediētly to giue ouer our ſelues by him to be gouerned, that he may rule vs at his pleaſure after we be as it were bound to him. For if the reprobate, who are the bōd ſlaues of Satā be carried not only willingly, but alſo greedily through his motion: how much more ought this voluntary bondage, or ſeruiſe to be in the children of God?

23 *But that the holy ghoſt.* I do not vnderſtand this offſecret oracle, but of thoſe foretellings, which he heard euery where of the Prophets. And this ſpeech hath greater dignity to ſet forth the prophecies, then if the men theſelues, which ſpake, were called & cited to be witneſſes. For by this meane the word of God hath his authoritie, whē we confeſſe that the ſpirit of God is the author thereof: though the miniſters be mē. Now for as much as the ſame ſpirit which foretelleth Paul of bonds & tribulations, doth alſo hold him faſt bound that he canot reſuſe to ſubmit himſelf vnto him, by this we learn that what dangers ſo euer hang ouer our heads, we are not therby acquitted, but that we muſt obey the cōmande mēts of god, & ſelow his calling. In vain therefore do thoſe mē flatter theſelues, who wil do good ſo long as they be free from moleſtation, & may make diſcōmodities, damages and dangers of death ſufficient excuſes.

24 *I care not.* Al the godly muſt be ſo framed in their minds, & chiefly the miniſters of the word, that ſetting al things apart, they make haſt to obey god. The life is indeed a more excellēt gift, thē that it ought to be neglected: to wit, ſeing we be therin created after the image of god, to the end we may think vpō ū bleſſed immortality which is laid vp for vs in heaue: in which the lord doth now by diuers teſtimonies & tokēs ſhew himſelf to be our father.

But

But because it is ordained to be vnto vs as a race; we must alwayes hasten vnto the marke; & overcome all hinderances; least any thing hinder or stay vs in our course. For it is a filthy thing for vs to be so holden with a blind desire to liue, that we loose the causes of life for life it self; & this do the words of Paul expresse. For he doeth not simplic set light by his life: but he doth forget the respect thereof, that he may finish his course: that he may fulfil the ministry which he hath receiued of Christ: as if he should say that he is not desirous to liue, saue onely that he may satisfie the calling of God: and that therefore it shall bee no griefe to him to loose his life, so that hee may come by death vnto the goale of the function prescribed to him by God. And we must note that which he saith *with ioy*, for his meaning is that this is taken from the faithful by no sorrow or griefe, but that they both liue and die to the Lord. For the ioy of a good conscience is more deeply & surely laid vp, thā that it can be take away by any externall trouble, or any sorrow of the flesh: it triumpheth more ioyfully, than that it can be oppressed. Also we must note the definition of his course: to wit, that it is the ministry receiued of the Lord: Paul doth in deed speak of himself: yet by his own example he teacheth that all those goe astray who haue not God to be the gouernour of their course. Whereupon it followeth that his calling is vnto euery one of vs a rule of good life. Neither can we be otherwise perswaded that the Lorde alloweth that which we doe, vnlesse our life be framed & ordered according to his wil; which certainty is required espēcially in the ministers of the worde, that they take nothing in hand vnlesse they haue Christ for their authour. Neither is it to be doubted but that Paul in giuing his Apostleship this mark (as he vseth to do very often) doth confirm the credit thereof. He calleth it the Gospel of the grace of God, of the effect or end, notwithstanding this is a title of rare commendation; that by the gospel saluation & the grace of god are brought vnto vs. For it is very expedient for vs to know that god is found ther to be merciful & fauorable.

25 *And behold now I know.* He doeth now vtter that plainly which he had insinuated couertly. And wee said that he did put them out of hope of his returne; to the end he might more deeply imprint in their minds his exhortations. For we know what great force the words and speeches of men haue, which are vttered at their departure or death. Also he wold haue them beware by this forwarning, that they do not depend vpon his presence, & so their faith shuld faint through wearisomnes. The doctrine of the Gospel is called the kingdome of God now again, which doth begin the kingdome of god in this world, by renewing men after the image of God, vntill it be made perfect at length in the last resurrection.

26 *Wherefore I take you to record.* It is all one as if he had saide; I call you to witnesse, or I call you to beare witnesse before God and his Angels. And this doth he not so much for his own cause as that he may prescribe vnto them their dutie with greater authoritie. Furthermore this place containeth a brieve sum of teaching rightly and wel, and it exhorteth the teachers themselves vehemently & sharply, that they be diligent in their function. What order must Pastours than keepe in teaching?

First let them not est come at their pleasure what is profitable to be vttered and what to bee omitted: but let them leaue that to God alone to be ordered at his pleasure. So shal it come to passe that the inuentions of men shal haue none entrance into the Church of God. Againe mortall man shal not be so bold as to mangle the scripture and to pull it in peeces, that he may diminish this or that at his pleasure, that he may obscure some thing, and suppress many things; but shal deliuer whatsoeuer is reuealed in the scripture, though wisely and seasonable for the edifying of the people, yet plainly and without guile, as becommeth a faithfull & true interpreter of God. I said that wisdom must be vsed: because we must alwaies haue respect vnto profit, so there be no subtiltie vsed, wherein many take too great delight; when as they turne and wrest the word of God vnto their methods, and forge to vs a certaine kinde of Philosophie mixed of the Gospel & their own inuentions: Namely because this mixture is more delectable. Thence haue we freewill, thence the deserts of works, thence the deniall of the providence and free election of God. And that which we said euē now is to be noted, that the counsel of god, whereof Paul maketh mention; is included in his word, & that it is to be sought no where else. For many things are kept from vs in this life, the perfect & full manifestation whereof is deferred vntill that day, wherein we shall see God as he is with new eyes face to face. Therefore those do set forth the will of God, who interpret the scriptures faithfullly, & out of them instruct the people in the faith, in the feare of God, and in all exercises of Godlines. And as we said of late, that those are condemned by this sentence, who disputing philosophicallie, least they should teach any thing which is removed from the common sense of men, and therefore odious, do corrupt with their leaven the puritie of the scripture: so, both sharply and sore doth Paul thunder against them, who for feare of the crosse and persecution do speake onely doubtfully and darkly.

1. Cor. 13.
12.

Ezec. 3. 18.
20.

I am cleane from the blood. I do not doubt but that he had respect vnto the place of Ezechiel: where God denounceth that his prophet shall be guiltie of the blood of the wicked vnlesse he exhort them vnto repentance. For vpon this condition doth he appoint pastors ouer his church, that if any thing perish through their negligence an account may be required at their hands: yea, that vnlesse they shewe the way of saluation without guile and crookes, the destruction of those who go astray may be imputed vnto them. Those men must needs be wonderful dull whom such a sharp threatning cannot awake. Wherefore the Epicurish impiety of the popish cleargie doth the more bewray it selfe, where though they crake and bragge of their honorable titles, yet they thinke no more vpon giuing of an account for so many soules which perish, than if there sate no iudge in heauen, neither is their vngodlines any whit lesse filthy before the whole world, in that being giuen only to deuour sheepe, they vsurpe the name of Pastours. Furthermore the Lord sheweth how deare soules be to him, seeing that he doth so sharply punish the Pastours sluggishness, for their destruction: but we see what small account many men make of their owne saluation, for which euē God himself doth vouchsafe to be carefull.

28 Therefore take heede to your selues and to all the flocke, wherein the holy ghost hath made you ouerscers to gouern the church of God, which he hath pur chased with his blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departure grienous wolues wil enter in among you, not sparing the flocke.

30 And of your owne selues shall arise men, speaking peruerse things, that they may draw disciples after them.

31 For which cause watch ye, remembring that by the space of threc yeres, I ceased not night and day to warne euery one of you with teares.

32 And now breshren I commend you to God and to the worde of his grace, who is able to build farther and to giue you an inherisance among all those who are sanctified.

28 Take heede therefore. He doth now apply his speech vnto them, & by many reasons sheweth that they must watch diligently, and that he is not so careful, but because necessity doth so require. The first reason is, because they be bound to the flocke quer which they be set. The second, because they were called vnto this function not by mortall man, but by the holic Ghost. The third, because it is no small honor to gouern the Church of God. The fourth, because the Lord did declare, by an euident testimony, what account he doth make of the church, seing that he hath redeemed it with his blood. As touching the first, hee doth not onelic commaund them to take heed to the flocke, but first to the selues, For that man will neuer be carefull for the saluation of other men, who will neglect his owne. And in yaine shall that man pricke forward other to liue godlily, who will himselfe shewe no desire of godlinesse. Yea that man will not take paines with his flocke, who forgetteth himselfe, seing he is a part of the flock. Therefore to the end, they may be careful for the flocke: to them committed, Paul comandeth & warneth, that euery one of them keep himself in the feare of God. For by this meanes it shoulde come to passe that euery one should be as faithful towards his flocke as he ought. For we said that Paul reasoneth from their calling, that they be bound to take paines in the church of God, whereof they haue the gouernment. As if he should say, that they may not do whatsoeuer they like best, neither are they free, after they be made pastours: but they be bound publicly to al the flocke.

The holic Ghost hath made you ouerscers. By the xerie worde he putteth them in minde, that they be placed, as it were in a watche tower, that they may watch for the common safetic of all men. But Paul standeth principally vpon this, that they were not appointed, by men, but the charge of the Church was committed vnto them by God. For which cause they must be the more diligent and careful, because they must giue a strait account before that high seat of iudgement. For the more excellent the dignitie of that Lord & maister whom we serue, is, the more reuerence doe we giue him naturally, and the reuerence it selfe doth sharpen our studie and diligence.

Moreouer, though the Lord would haue ministers of the word chose

from the beginning by the voyces of men, yet doth he alwaies challenge the government of the church to himselfe, not onely to the end we may acknowledge him to be the only gouernour thereof, but also know that the vncōparable treasure of saluatiō, doth come from him alone. For he is robbed of his glorie if we thinke that the gospel is brought vnto vs, either by chance, or by the wil of mē, or their industry. But this doth Paul attribute peculiarly to the spirit, by whō God doth gouern his church, & who is to euery man a secret witnes of his calling, in his owne conscience. Concerning the word Ouerseer, or Bishop, wee must briefly note this, that Paul calleth al the elders of Ephesus by this name, as wel one as other. Whence we gather, that according to the vse of the scripture, Bishops differ nothing frō Elders. But that it came to passe through vice & corruption, that those who were chief in euery citie, began to be called Bishops. I call it corruption, not because it is euil that some one man should be chiefe in euery colledge or company: but because this boldnes is intollerable, when men by wresting the names of the scripture vnto their custome, doubt not to change the tongue of the holy ghost.

To gouerne the Church. The Greeke worde *Poimainein* doth signifie to feede. But by a fitte similitude it is translated vnto enerie kinde of gouernment. And wee haue saide that this is the thirde argument drawen from the excellencie of the function: as the same Paul telleth Timotheus elswhere, that he take heed & see how he ought to behaue him selfe in the house of God, which is the church of the liuing God, the pillar & ground of trueth. As if he should say, that there is no time to be idle in such a weightie calling, & that those are lesse excusable, whō God hath made stewards of his family, the higher that degree of honor is, vnlesse they be correspondent to so great dignity, that is, vnles they do their duty diligently. Now if Bishops or ouerseers be made by the holy ghost, to the end they may feede the church, the Hierarchy of papistry is ridiculous, wherein bishops being proud of their painted sheath & vain title, do not so much as once meddle with the function of teaching, no nor for fashions sake.

Which he hath purchased. The 4. reaso wherby Paul doth carefully pricke forward the pastors to do their duty diligēly, bicause the lord hath giue no smal pledge of his loue toward the church, in shedding his own blood for it. Wherby it appeareth how precious it is to him: & surely ther is nothing which ought more vehemētly to vrge pastors to do their duty ioyfully, then if they consider, that the price of the blood of Christ is committed to the. For herevpō it foloweth, that vnles they take paines faithfully in the church, the lost soules are not only imputed to the, but they be also guilty of sacriledge, bicause they haue profaned the holy blood of the sonne of God, & haue made the redemption gottē by him to bee of none effect, so much as in them lieth. And this is a most cruel offence, if through our sluggishnes the death of Christ do not only become vile or base, but the fruit thereof be also abolished & perished: and it is said that god hath purchased the church, to the end we may know that he wold haue it remaine wholly to himselfe, bicause it is meet: & right that he possesse those whō he hath redēmed.

Not.

Notwithstanding we must also remember, that all mankind are the bondslaves of Satan, vntil Christ set vs free from his tyranny, gathering vs into the inheritance of his father. But because the speech which Paul vseth seemeth to be somewhat hard, we must see in what sense he saith that God purchased the Church with his blood. For nothing is more absurd, than to faine or imagine God to be mortall or to haue a bodie. But in this speech he commendeth the vnitie of person in Christ: for because there be distinct natures in Christ, the scripture doth sometimes recite that apart by it self which is proper to either. But when it setteth god before vs made manifest in the flesh, it doth not separte the human nature from the godhead. Notwithstanding because againe two natures are so vnited in Christ, that they make one person, that is vnproperlie translated somtimes vnto the one, which doth truly and in deed belong to the other, as in this place Paul doth attribute blood to God: because the man Iesus Christ who shed his blood for vs, was also God. This manner of speaking is called of the olde writers *communicatio idiomatum*, because the property of the one nature is applied to the other. And I said that by this means is manifestly expressed one person of Christ: least we imagine him to be double, which Nestorius did in times past attempt, and yet for all this we must not imagine a confusion of the two natures, which Eutiches went about to bring in: or which the Spanish dogge Seruetus hath at this time inuented, who maketh the godhead of Christ nothing else but a forme or image of the humain nature, which he dreameth to haue alwayes shined in God.

29 For I know. Paul doth now exhort the Ephesians to watch diligently, by the necessity which is a most sharp pricke. For he saith that grievous wolues are readie to inuade the sheepefold. This is a thing alwayes incident to the Church to be hated of wolues. Wherefore there is no time to sleepe. But the moe and the more hurtfull those be who breake in, the more watchful must the Pastors be. For God doth sometimes release some part of trouble, that the flocke may be fed quietly and peaceably: and as when the weather is faire & cleare the sheepe are fed more safely in the fields, and there is more danger when the aire is cloudy & darke: so the Church of God hath sometimes some faire weather granted to it, after that commeth a troublesome time, which is more fit for the subtiltie of the wolues. Therefore Paul doth meane, that it standeth them vpon to be more watchful than they haue bin hitherto, because greater dangers hang ouer their heads. But the question is how Paul knew this. First we need not doubt of this, but that his presence was of great force to driue away wolues, & no maruel if the power of the spirit which shineth in the ministers of Christ do bridle the wicked so, that they dare not vtter their poison: yea if that heauenly light do driue away much darknes of Satan. Therefore seeing that Paul did know that the malice of satan was kept vnder for a time by his industry, he doth easily foretel what wil happen after his departure, though it be likely he was certified by the lord through the spirit of prophecy, that others might be admonished by him, as we see it came to passe. Howsoeuer it be, so often as faithful Pastours go away, let

vs learne that we must beware of wolues; whom they can hardly driue from the sheepcoates though they watch most narrowly.

30 *Of your owne selues shall arise.* This amplifieth the grievousnesse of the euill, because there bee some wolues within, and so hiding themselves vnder the title of Pastours, do wait for some opportunitie wherein they may doe hurt. Also he declareth what daunger these wolues do threaten, to wit, the scattering abroad of the flocke: when the Church is drawne away frō the vnitie of faith, and is diuided into sects. Neither are all those wolues who doe not their ducie as they ought: but there be oftentimes hyrclings a kinde of men not so hurtfull as the other. But the corruption of doctrine is a most deadly plague to the sheepe. Now in the third place the fountaine and beginning of this euill is noted: because they wil draw disciples after them. Therefore ambition is the mother of all heresies. For the synceritie of the word of God doth then flourish, when the Pastors ioine hand in hand to bring disciples vnto Christ; because this alone is the sound state of the Church, that he be heard alone: wherefore both the doctrine of saluation must needs be peruered, and also the safetie of the flocke must needs goe to nought, where men bee desirous of mastership. And as this place teacheth that almost all corruptions of doctrine flow from the pride of men: so we learne againe out of the same that it cannot otherwise be, but that ambitious men will turne away from right puritie, and corrupt the word of God. For seeing that the pure and sincere handling of the scripture tendeth to this end; that Christ alone may haue the preheminance: and that men can challenge nothing to themselves, but they shal take so much from the glory of Christ: it followeth that those are corrupters of sound doctrine, who are addicted to themselves and study to aduance their own glory, which doth onely darken Christ. Which thing the Lord himself doth confirme in the seuenth of Iohn. Furthermore by the word Arise which he vseth, he signifieth that these wolues do nourish secret destruction, vntil they may haue some opportunitie offered to breake out. And this place doth very wel preuent an horrible stumbling blocke and offence which Satan hath alwayes cast in to trouble weake consciences. If externall and professed enemies doe resist the Gospel, this doeth not so much hurt to the Church, as if inwarde enemies issue out of the bosome of the Church which at a sodaine blow to the field, or which vnfaithfully prouoke the people to fall away: and yet God hath from the beginning exercised his Church with this temptation, and now doth exercise it. Wherefore let our faith be fortified with this defense, that it faile not, if at any time it so fall out that Pastours begin to rage like wolues. He saith they shalbe grievous wolues that he may the more terrifie them: secondly they shalbe authours of wicked opinions, and that to the end they may draw disciples after them: because it cannot almost otherwise be but that ambition will corrupt the puritie of the Gospel. By this it appeareth also how frivolous and vaine the bragge of the Papists is, touching their continuall succession. For seeing we can easily shew that these horned beasts are nothing lesse than that which they will be thought to be being alwayes conuict,

Iohn.7.18.

conuist, they flie vnto this fortresse, that they succeede the Apostles by a cōtinual course. As if these did not also succeede the, of who Paul willerh to take heed. Therefore seeing that god, either to proue the constancie of his, or in his iust iudgement doth oftentimes suffer wolues to rage vnder the person of Pastours: the authoritie doth not consist in the name and place alone: neither is succession any thing worthy, vnlesse faith and integrity be ioyned therewithall. But and if the Papists obiekt, that they cannot be called wolues, one worde of Paul shall bee as a touchstone to proue whether this be so or no: that they may (sayeth he) drawe Disciples after them. And to what ende tendeth all popish religion saue onlie that mens lust and pleasure may reigne in steed of Gods worde? But Christe hath no Disciples, where hee is not counted the onely master.

31 For which cause watch. Paul doeth againe exhort them vnto diligence by his owne example: though hee doth ioyne therewithall feare of daunger: as if he should say, that they haue need of great attention to beware: and that it is an vnseemly thing that they should bee wearied, who haue scene his singular patience by the space of three yeres. Also he speaketh of his teares which did adde no small efficacye to his exhortations. Whereas he saith that he admonished euery one, it may be referred as wel vnto the cōmon people as vnto the elders. For because he was determined to speak such things as shuld be cōmon to the whol church, he speaketh as if the whole body were present. Neuer thelesse if any had rather restrain it vnto the order of the pastours: the meaning shall bee this, that their studies must be kindled not onely with this speech which he now maketh, but that it is meet that they remember those often exhortations which he did continually beat in by the space of three yeres, and that with many teares. Yet it seemeth to me to be more likely that he speaketh of all in generall.

32 I commend you to God. He vseth a prayer, which in an oration serving to moue the hearers greatly, ought not to be counted absurd. For hee did not passe for diuiding his Sermon into partes as the Rhetoricians vse to doe: seeing no wordes were sufficient to expresse the vehemencie of the affections wherewith he was inflamed. He had intreated alreadye of great matters and weightie, which did farre exceed mans abilitye.

Therefore he turneth himself vnto prayer, and by litle & litle draweth toward an ende of his speecche: though it be rather an expressing of a desire, then a direct prayer. As if he should haue said, that they be vnable to beare so great a burthen: but he doth wish to them new helpe from heauen, whereto they may trust and ouercome all temptations. And it is not to be doubted, though he speake vnto the pastours alone, but that he doth also comprehend the whol church. First he cōmendeth the to God. Secondly to the word of his grace. Notwithstanding it is all one commendation: but Paul meant to expresse the meanes whereby the Lorde doth defende the saluation of his, which (as Peter saith) is kepte by faith: and the meanes of this keeping dependeth vppon the word.

least it come in hazard amidst so many daungers. And it is very expedient for vs to know how God will keep vs. For because his maiestie is hid from vs, vntill he come vnto vs by his word, we looke too and fro being in doubt.

Therefore so soone as he receiueth vs to be kept, he maketh his word the instrument to keep our saluation, in which sense hee addeth the adiunct, Grace (for the Genetiue case after the manner of the Hebrewes doth signify an effect) to the end the faithful might the more safely rest in the word, where God doth shewe foorth his fauour. This exposition is plaine and apt: for whereas some vnderstand it of Christ, it is too much rackt.

Who is able to build farther. The participle *dunamenos*, is to be referred vnto God, not vnto his word. And this consolatio is added for this cause least they faint through the feeling of their infirmities. For so long as we be inuironned with the infirmities of the flesh, we be like to an house whose foundation is laid. All the godly must bee grounded in deede in Christ, but their faith is far from being perfect. Yea though the foundation continue stable & sure, yet some parts of the building be like to fall and quaike, Wherefore there is great need both of continuall building, & also now & then new props and staves be necessarie. Neuertheles Paul saith that we must not faint, because the Lord wil not leaue his worke vnfinished: as he doth likewise teach in the first chapter to the Philippians, He which hath begun a good work in you, will performe it vntill the day of the Lord. Wherto that of the Psalm answereth, thou wilt not forsake the work of our hands. That which is added immediatly concerning the inheritance of life, appertaineth vnto the very inioying of life. So soone as Christ hath appeared to vs, we passe in deed from death to life: & faith is an entrance into the kingdome of heauen: neither is the Spirit of adoption giuen to vs in vain: but Paul promiset in this place to the faithful, a continuall encrease of grace, vntill they see the possession of the inheritance whereunto they haue been called, which is now laid vp for them in heauen. He calleth it the power of god not as we vse to imagine it without effect, but which is commonly called actuall. For the faithful must so lay hold vpon it, that they may haue it readie like to a shield or buckler to holde vp against all assaults of Satan. As the Scripture doth teach that we haue ayde enough in the power of God: so let vs remember that none are strong in the Lord saue those who abandoning all hope and confidence of their owne freewill, trust and leane to him, who, as Paul saith very well, is able to build farther.

I haue desired no wages silver or gold or raiment.

Yea, yee your selues knowe how that these hands haue ministered to my necessities, and to those which are with me.

I haue shewed you all things, that so labouring you must receiue the weakes, and remember the wordes of the Lord Iesus because he said, It is a blessed thing rather to giue then to take.

And when hee had thus spoken, he kneeled downe and prayed with them all.

Phil. 1.6.

Psal. 138. 8.

37 And there arose great weeping among them all: & falling upon Paul his
 necke they kissed him,

38 Sorowing most for the words which he spake that they should see his face no
 more. And they brought him to the ship.

33 I haue not. As he shewed of late what an hurtful plague ambition
 is: So now he sheweth that they must beware of couetousness: & he ma-
 keth himselfe an example againe, euē in this point, that hee did couer
 no mans goods: but did rather get his liuing with the worke of his hands.
 Not that it was sufficient to find him without some helpe: but because in
 applying his handiworke he spared the churches, that he might not be
 too chargeable to them, so much as in him lay. We must note that he
 doth not only deny that he did take any thing violently, as hungry fel-
 lowes doe importunately wring out preyes oftentimes, but also hee af-
 firmeth that he was cleane from all wicked desire. Whence wee gather
 that no man can be a good minister of the worde, but he must also con-
 temne money. And surely we see that nothing is more common, than
 that those corrupt the worde of God to winne the fauour of men, who
 are altogether filthily giuen to get gaine. Which vice Paul doth sharply
 condemne in Bishops, elsewhere.

1.Tim.3.3.

34 Yea, yee know. Hee doeth not in these words precisely set downe a
 Law which all the ministers of the worde must needs keepe: for he did
 not behaue himselfe so loosely and lordlike, that hee did take that away
 which the Lord had granted to his seruants: but doth rather in many
 places maintaine their right, which is, that they bee maintained with
 that which is common. Whereunto belongeth that, that hee suffered
 many Churches to minister vnto him food and raiment. Neither did he
 onely freely receiue wages for the worke which he did in any place, of
 those who were there: but when he was in necessitie at Corinthus, hee
 saith that he robbed other Churches to releue his pouertie. Therefore
 he doth not simply command Pastours to maintain their life with their
 handyworke: but immediatly after he declareth how far forth he exh-
 orteth them to follow his example. Those men of Corinthus did not de-
 nie him that which was due to him: but seeing that the false Apostles did
 boast that they did their worke freely, and gate thereby prayse among
 the people: Paul would not be behind them in this point, nor giue them
 any occasion to accuse him falsely: as hee himselfe affirmeth. 1. Cor. 9.
 and 2. Cor. 11. Therefore he warneth that there bee no stumbling
 blocke layed in the way of the weake, and that their faith bee not ouer-
 throwen. For to receiue the weake importeth as much as somewhat to
 beare with their rudenesse & simplenesse, as it is Rom. 14.

Mat.10.10

1.Co.9.14.

Galat.6.6.

1.Tim.5.

17.

Phil.4.10.

16.

2.Cor.11.

8.

1.Cor.9.15,

1. Cor. 11.

10.

Rom. 14.2.

And to remember. We read this sentence in no place word for word:
 but the Euangelists haue other not much unlike this, out of which Paul
 might gather this. Again we know that all the sayings of Christ were
 not written. And hee repeateth that generall doctrine of the contempt
 of money. Whereof this is a true token when a man is more bent to
 giue then to take. Neither did Christ speake only politicklie, as if those

who

Prou. 19. 17

who are liberrall, are therefore blessed, because they binde other men vnto them with their benefites, and it is a kinde of bondage, to owe anie thing: but he had respect vnto an higher thing, because he which giueth to the poore, lendeth vnto the Lorde: that those be faithful and good stewardest of God, who impart to their brethren some of that plentie which they haue lent them: that men draw neerer vnto God in nothing then in liberalitie. We doe also reade these titles of liberality in profane Authours: and a good part of the worlde confesse that these things are true, but they consent (as it is in the proverbe) with Asses eares. For the common life doth shewe howe few be perswaded that nothing ought more to be wished, then that we bestow our goods to helpe our brethren. For which cause the Disciples of Christ must more studiously thinke vpon this felicitie, that abstaining so much as in them lieth, fro that which is an other mans, they accustome themselves to giue. And yet they must not doe this with an hawty heart, as if it were a miserable thing for them to be in any mans danger: either through ambition, that they may binde other men to them; but onely that they may exercise themselves willingly in the duties of loue; and by this meanes make knowne the grace of their Adoption.

36 *And kneeling downe.* The inward affection is in deed the chiefest thing in prayer: yet the external signes, as kneeling, vncouering of the head, lifting vp of the hands, haue a double vse: the first is, that we exercise all our members to the glorie and worship of God: secondly that by this exercise our sluggishnes may be awaked as it were. There is also a thirde vse in solemne and publike prayer, because the children of God do by this meanes make profession of their godlinesse, and one of them doth prouoke another vnto the reuerence of God. And as the lifting vp of the hands is a token of boldnesse and of an earnest desire, so to testifie our humilitie wee fall downe vpon our knees. But he sealeth vp and concludeth that sermon which he made before with prayer: because we can hope for no profite of our doctrine saue onely from the blessing of God. Wherefore if we be desirous to do any good by teaching, admonishing & exhorting, let vs alwayes end after this sort: to wit, with prayer.

37 *Great weeping.* No maruell if all the godly did intirely loue this holy man. For it had been a point of too grosse vnthankfulnesse to despise him who the Lord had so beautified with so many excellent gifts. And the chief cause of their weeping was, as Luke noteth, because they should see him no more. For they did bewaile their owne condition, & the condition of all the whole church of Asia not in vaine, which they saw to be deprived of an inestimable treasure. And when the Spirit commedeth their teares by the mouth of Luke, as witnesses of sincere godlinesse, he condemneth the rashnes of those who require at the hands of the faithful hard and cruel constancie. For that is false whereof they dreamt that those affections proceed only of corruption, which we haue naturally from God. Wherefore the perfection of the faithful consisteth not in this, that they put off all affections: but that they beauequed themselves with only for iust causes, and that they moderate the same.

CHAP. XXI.

1 **A**ND when it came to passe that wee had loosed being pulled away from them, wee came with a straight course to Choos, and the next day to the Rhodes, and thence to Patara.

2 And when we had gotten a ship, which sailed ouer to Phenice, when wee were entred into it we lanchd.

3 And when Cyprus began to appeare to vs, leauing it on the left hand; we sailed into Syria, and came to Tyrus: for heere the shippe did vnlade her burthen.

4 And when we had found disciples, we staid there seuen daies: who said to Paul by the Spirit that he should not go vp to Ierusalem.

5 And when the dayes were ended, wee departed and went our way, and they all with their wiues and children accompanied vs, vntill wee were out of the citie: and when we had kneeled downe vpon the shoare, wee prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we went vp into the ship: & they returned home.

1 Luke reckoneth vp briefly the course of his sayling; and that not only to winne credite to the historic, that we may know what was done in euery place, but that the Readers may weigh with themselues the inuincible and heroicall fortitude which was in Paul, who had rather bee tossed and troubled with such long, vneleuall, and troublefome iourneys, that he might serue Christ, then prouide for his owne quietnesse. Where as he saith that they were drawen and pulled away, it is not simply referred vnto the distance of places: but because the brethren stood on the shoare, so long as they could see the ship wherein Paul and his companions were carried. He nameth the hauens where the ship arriued for this cause, that we may know that they sailed quietly without trouble of tempest. Let vs search the describers of countries touching the situation of the cities wherof he maketh mention, it is sufficient for me to shew Luke his purpose.

4 And when they had found disciples. Though the number of the faithfull was but small, yet there came some seed of the gospel thither, according to the prophetes, least Tyrus shuld be altogether void of the blessing of God. And here as in other places going before, Luke calleth christians disciples, that wee may knowe that those along are numbred in the flocke of Christ, who haue imbraced his doctrine by faith. For that is a vain & false profession for a man to giue his name to Christ, & not to vnderstand what he teacheth or speaketh. And let the Readers mark, that Paul staid seuen dayes at Tyrus for no other cause, sauing that he might strengthen them. So that we see, that whither soeuer he came, he foreflowed no occasion to doe good.

They said by the spirit. Namely with the approbation of speeche, that Paul might know that they spake by the Spirit of prophesie. Surely this was no smal temptation, to cause him not to finish the iourney which he had taken in hand, seeing the holy ghost did dissuade him from the same.

And

Esai. 23. 18.

And this was a very faire colour to flie from the crosse, if hee had cared for his own safetie, to be drawn backe as it were with the hand of God. Notwithstanding he ceaseth not to hold on thither whither he knew he was called by the Lord. Notwithstanding heere ariseth a question, howe the brethren can disuade him by the Spirit from doing that, which Paul did testifie he doth by the secret motion of the same spirit? Is the Spirit contrary to himselfe, that he doth now loose Paul whom he held bound inwardly? I answer that there be diuers giftes of the Spirit: so that it is no maruell if those who excell in the gift of prophesie bee some times destitute of iudgement or strength. The Lord shewed to these brethren of whom Luke maketh mention, what should come to passe: yet neuertheless they know not what is expedient and what Paul his calling doth require, because the measure of their gift doth not reach so farre. And the Lorde would haue his seruauant admonished of purpose, partly that through long meditation he might be better furnished and prepared to suffer whatsoeuer shoulde come, partly that his constancie might more plainly appeare, when as being certified by prophesies of the dolefull euent, he doth notwithstanding wittingly and willingly make hast to endure whatsoeuer things shall befall him.

5 *With their wiues and children.* This was no small testimonie of loue, in that they accompanied Paul out of the citie with their wiues & children: which thing Luke doth report, partly that he might comend their godlinesse according as it deserued: partly that hee might declare that Paul had that honour giuen him which was due to him. Whence we do also gather, that hee meant nothing lesse, then to prouide for his owne commoditie, seeing that he was nor kept backe with so great good will, which was a pleasant bait to entice him to stay. And wee must also note the solemne custome of praying in weightier affayres, & that being certified by God of the danger, they are more stirred vp to pray.

7 *And when wee had finished our course, from Tyrus wee came downe to Ptolemais: and after that wee had saluted the brethren, wee abode with them one day.*

8 *And on the morrow we which were with Paul, departed and came to Cesarea. And entring into the house of Philip the Euangelist, which was one of the seuen we abode with him.*

9 *And this man had foure daughters virgines which did prophesie.*

10 *And when we abode many dayes, there came a certain prophete from Iury named Agabus.*

11 *When hee was come to vs, hee tooke Paul his girdle, and binding his owne feete and hands, hee said: Thus saith the holy ghost, The man which oweth this girdle, shall the Iewes thus binde at Ierusalem, and shall deliuer him into the hands of the Gentiles.*

12 *And when we had heard these things, both we and also the rest which were of that place requested him, that he would not go vp to Ierusalem.*

13 *Then Paul answered and said, What doe you weeping and afflicting my heart? I truly am readie not to be bound onely, but also to die at Ierusalem for the*

name of the Lord Iesus.

14 And when he would not be perswaded, we were quiet, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

7 Luke doth briefly declare that Paul was also receiued at *Ptolomais* by the brethren. This is a citie of *Thenicia*, standing vppon the sea coast, not farre from the borders of Iudea, from which Paul and his companions had no long journey to Cesarea. But if the readers bee disposed to knowe farther touching the scituation of regions, let them resort vnto the describers of places and countries. Furthermore he saith, that when he came to Cesarea, they lodged with Philip, whom he calleth an Euangelist. Though he were one of the seuen deacons, as we may see in the sixte chapter. By this wee may easily gather, that that Deaconshippe was an office which continued but for a time: because it had not otherwise beene lawfull for Philip to forsake Ierusalem, and to goe to Cesarea. And in this place he is set before vs not as a voluntary forsaker of his office, but as one to whom a greater and more excellent charge was committed. The Euangelists in my iudgement were in the midst betweene Apostles and docters. For it was a function next to the Apostles, to preach the Gospel in all places, and not to haue any certain place of abode: onely the degree of honour was inferiour. For when Paul describeth the order of the Church, he doth so put them after the Apostles that hee sheweth that they haue more roomth giuen them where they may teach, than the Pastours, who are tyed to certaine places. Therefore Philip did for a time exercise the office of a Deacon at Ierusalem: whom the Church thought afterward to be a meete man, to whom the treasure of the Gospel should be committed.

Ch. 6. 5.

9 *Fower daughters.* This is added for the commendation of Philip: not onely that we might know that his house was well ordered, but also that it was famous and excellent through the blessing of God. For assuredly it was no small gift to haue fower daughters, all endewed with the spirit of prophetic.

Ephes. 4. 12.

By this meanes, the Lorde meant to bewtifie the first beginnings of the Gospel, when hee raised vp men and women, to foretell thinges to com. Prophecies had now almost ceased many yeres among the Iewes to the end they might bee more attentue & desirous to heare the newe voice of the Gospell. Therefore seeing that prophesying which was in a manner quite ceased, doth nowe after long time returne againe, it was a token of a more perfect state. Notwithstanding it seemeth that the same was the reason why it ceased shortly after: for God did support the old people with diuers foretellings, vntill Christ shoulde make an ende of all prophecies. Therefore it was meete that the newe kingdome of Christe shoulde, bee thus furnished and beautified with this furniture that all men myght knowe, that that promised, vilitation of the Lorde was present: and it was also expedient that it shoulde last but for a short time least the faithfull shoulde alwayes waite for some farther thinge, or leaste that curious wittes myght haue occasion giuen

to

to seek or inuent some new thing euer now and then. For we know that when that abilitie and skil was taken away, there were notwithstanding many brainicke fellowes, who did boast that they were prophets, & also it may be that the frowardnes of men did deprive the Church of this gift. But that one cause ought to be sufficient, in that God by taking away prophecies, did testifie that the end and perfection was present in Christ: & it is vncertaine how these maids did execute the office of prophecyings: sauing that the spirit of God did so guide and gouerne them, that he did not ouerthrow the order which he himself set down. And for as much as he doth not suffer women to beare any publike office in the church, it is to be thought that they did prophecie at home, or in some priuate place without the common assembly.

Sap. 11. 28.

10 *A certaine Prophet.* Though Luke doth not plainlie expresse the same, yet do I coniect that this Agabus was the same of whom mention is made in the xi. chapter, who foretold that there should be famine vnder the reigne of Claudius Caesar. And when as Luke calleth him a prophet as of late he called the four daughters of Philip, he signifieth that it was not a common but a peculiar gift. Now we must see to what ende the persecutiō which was at hand was now again shewed by Agabus. As concerning Paul he was sufficiently told already. Therefore I doe not doubt but that this confirmation was added for other mens sake: because the Lord meant euery where to make knowne the bonds of his seruant partly that they might know that he entred the combat willingly: partly that they might perceiue that he was appointed of god to be a chāpion to fight for the gospell. It was surely a profitable example of inuincible constancie; seeing that he offered himself willingly and wittingly to the violence of the aduersaries: and no lesse profitable is it for vs at this day, that his apostleship should be confirmed with this voluntarie & no lesse constant giuing ouer of his life.

Ier. 20. 2.

Ier. 27. 2.

& 32. 7.

Ez. 12. 5.

The man who breeth this girdle. It was an vsuall thing among the prophets to represent those things which they spake by signes: neither did they confirme their prophecies by vsing signes, through their owne motion, but at the commandement of the spirit: as when Isaias is commanded to goe barefoot: Ieremie to put a yoke vpon his necke, to sel the possession and to buy it: & Ezechiel to digge through the wall of his house priuily, and in the same night to carry forth burthens. These and such like might seeme to the common sort to be toies: but the same spirit who did apply signes to his wordes, did inwardly touch the hearts of the godly, as if they had bin brought to the very thing it selfe. So this spectacle mentioned by Luke, did no lesse moue Paul his companions, then if they had seene him bound in deed. The false prophets did after ward assay to delude the simple by this pollicie, as Satan is in a manner Gods ape: and his ministers do enuie the seruantes of God. Zedechias made himselfe hornes, wherewith he promised Syria should be punished: Ananias by breaking Ieremies yoke, put the people in a vaine hope of deliuerance, GOD hath suffered the reprobate to bee deluded with such delusions, that he might punish their vnbeleefe.

But

But forasmuch as there was in them no force of the Spirit, their vanitie did no whit hurt the faithfull. This is also worthie to be nored, that Agabus doth nor set before their eies a dumb spectacle, but he coupleth therewith the worde, whereby he may shew to the faithfull the vse and end of the ceremonie.

12 *Both we.* Bicause they had not al one reuelatiō, it is no maruel if their iudgements were diuers. For seeing these holy men knew, that ther consisted much in the life or death of one man, they would not haue him to come in danger rashly. And their desire is worthie praise, in that they desired to prouide for the common safetie of the church, by keeping back Paul. But on the other side Paul his constancie deserueth so much the more praise, when as he continueth so stedfast in the calling of god. For he was not ignorant what great trouble he shuld suffer, by reason of his bands. But because he knoweth the will of God, which was his only rule in taking counsell, he maketh no account of all other thinges, that hee may follow it. And assuredly we must bee so subiect to the will and pleasure of God, that no profit, no kind of reason may remoue vs from obeying him. When Paul doth reprehend the brethren, because they afflict his hart with weeping, he doth sufficiently declare that he was not hardened, but that hee was brought vnto some feeling and suffering together with them. Therefore the teares of the godly did wounde his heart: but that softnesse did not turne him out of the way, but that hee proceeded to follow God with a streight course. Therefore we must vse such curtesie toward our brethren, that the beck or will of God haue alwayes the vpper hand. Now Paul doth againe declare by his answer, that the seruants of Christe cannot be prepared to doe their dutie, vnlesse they despise death: and that none can euer bee well incouraged to liue to the Lord, but those who will willingly lay downe their liues for the testimonie of the truth.

14 *We ceased saying.* If they had thought that he runne rashly vnto death, they would not haue ceased so. Therefore they yeeld least they resist the holy Spirit, whereby they vnderstand that Paul is gouerned: for that which they had hearde before by the mouth of Paul, that hee was drawn as it were by the bands of the Spirit, was quite out of their heads by reason of the sorow which they had conceiued: but whē they be taught againe that it was the will of God that it should be so, they thinke it vnlawfull for them to resist any longer: and with this bridle must al our affections be kept in, that nothing bee so bitter, or dolefull, or harde which the wyl of God may not mittigate and mollifie. For so often as any thing which is harde or sharpe doeth fall out, we giue God small honor, vnlesse this cogitation preuaile with vs, that we must obey him.

15 *And after these daies, hauing taken vp our burthens we went vp to Ierusalem.*

16 *And there came togeather with vs certaine of the Disciples from Cesarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge,*

- 17 And when wee were come vnto Ierusalem, the brethren received vs gladly.
- 18 And on the morrowe Paul went in with vs vnto Iames and all the Elders were present.
- 19 Whom after we had saluted, he told by order all things which God had done among the Gentiles by his miniserie.
- 20 But when they had heard, they glorified the Lord: and said to him, Thou see'st brother how many thousand Iewes there be which beleue, and they all are earnest followers of the law.
- 21 And it hath beene tolde them concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Iewes which are amonge the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they muste not circuncise their children, nor line accordinge to the customes,
- 22 What is it then? The multitude must needes come together: for they shall heare that thou art come.
- 23 Therefore do this which we say to thee: we haue foure men which haue a vow vpon them.
- 24 Their take and purifie thy selfe with them, and doe cost on them that they may shawe their heads, and that all men may knowe that those things which they haue heard concerning thee are nothing: but that thou thy self also walkest an keepest the law.
- 25 And as concerning those which among the Gentiles haue beleued, we haue written, decreeing, that they obserue no such thing, but that they keepe themselves from things offered to Idols, and from blood, and from that which is strangled, and from fornication.

15 When we had taken vp our burdens. Paul his companions declare, that when they went about to call backe Paul from danger, they did rather care for the common safetie of the church, then euery man for his owne life. For after they had taken the repulse they doe not refuse to take part with him in the same daunger: and yet this was a plausible excuse that they were bound by no law to be halled to suffer death, through one mans stubbornnes. And this is truly to bring our affections in subiection to God, when we are terrified with no feare, but euery one of vs indeuoureth so much as he is able, to further that which we know doth please him. Also it appeareth more plainly, what great seruētnes of godlines was in the rest, who of their owne accord accompanie him, & bring him an host: whereas notwithstanding they might well haue feared manie discommodities.

17 They received vs gladly. Luke reciteth this therefore that hee may set forth the equity of the brethren, who did not credit rumors & false reportes. Though many enuious and wicked men did daily one after another endeavour to bring Paul in contempt: yet because Iames and his fellows in office were well perswaded of his vprightnesse, they were not estranged from him. Therefore they receiue him now curteously & brotherly as a seruau't of Christe, and declare that hee is welcome. This moderation must wee obserue diligently, that wee bee not too hasty

to belecue wicked reports: especially when those who haue giuen some testimony of their honesty, & who we haue tried to. serue God faithfully, are burdened with crimes vknown to vs or els doubtful: because Satan knoweth that nothing is more fit to lay waste the kingdō of Christ, then discord & disagreeemēt amōg the faithfull: he ceaseth not to spread abroad false speeches, which may cause one to suspect another. Therefore we must shut our eares against false reportes, that wee may belecue nothing concerning the faithfull ministers of the word, but that which we know to be true.

18 *All the Elders were present.* We may gather that out of this place, which we had already in the fifteenth chapter. So often as any weighty busines was to be handeled, the Elders were wont to come together, to the end the cōsultatiō might be more quiet without the multitude. We shal see anon, that the people were likewise admitted in their order: yet after that the elders had had their secret cōsultation among theselues.

19 And now Paul the weth his modesty when he doth not make himself the Author of those things which he had done: but giuing the praise to God, doth cal himself onlie the minister, whose industry God had vfed: As we must graunt, that whatsoeuer thing is excellent and woorthy praise, it is not done by our owne power, but for as much as GOD doth worke in vs: & especially touching the edifying of the church. Again, it appeareth how farre off the elders were from enuy, when they glorifie God for the joyfull successe. But because mention is made of no other Apostle besides Iames, we may coniect that they were gone into diuers places to spread abroad and preach the Gospel, as their calling did require. For the Lord had not appointed them to stay stil at Ierusalem: but after they had made a beginning there, he commandeth them to goe into Iudea and other partes of the world. Moreouer, the errour of those men, who thinke that Iames was one of the disciples who Paul numbred among the three pillars of the church, is refuted before in the fifteenth chapter. And though the same commandement was giuen to him which was giuen to the rest of his fellowes in office: yet I do not doubt but that they did so diuide them selues, that Iames stood stil at Ierusalem, whither many strangers were wont daily to resort. For that was all one as if he had preached the Gospel farre and wide in strange places.

Thou seest brother how many thousands. This Oration or speche hath two members: For first the Elders say, that so many of the Iewes as were conuerted; seing they be earnest followers of the law, are euil affected towarde Paul, because they thinke that hee indeuoureth with might and mayne to abolithe the lawe. Secondly, they exhort him that making a solenine vowe he purge himselfe, that he may not be had in suspition anie longer. They obiect to Paul the multitude of belecuers; that he may the more willingly yeeld to them: For if they had byn a few stubborne fellows, he would not haue bin so muche moued. But now he may not neglect both much people, and the whole bodie of the Church.

Vndoubtedly that zeale of the law which was in them was corrupt: and assuredly euē the very elders declare sufficiently that they like it not. For though they do not condemn it openly, neither sharply complaine of the same, yet bicause they separat theselues from their affectiō, they secretly confesse that they erre. If it had been a zeale according to knowledge, it ought to haue begun at them: but they contend not for the law it self, neither do they pretend the due reuerence therof, neither do they subscribe to those who are earnest followers of it. Therefore they both signifye that they are of another mind, and also that they doe not allow the superstition of the people. Notwithstanding, it is objected, that they saie that Paul was burdened with a false report or slander. Againe, when they require at his hands satisfaction, they seem to nourish that zeale. I answere, that though that were a true report in some respect wherewith the Iewes were offended, yet was it mixed with a slander. Paul did so teach the abrogating of the law, that notwithstanding by this meanes the authority therof did not only continue sound and perfect, but it was more holie. For as we said in the 7. chapter, the ceremonies should be vayne, vnlesse the effect thereof had beene shewed in Christ. Therefore those who say that they were abolished by the coming of Christ, are so farre from being blasphemous against the lawe, that they rather confirme the trueth thereof. We must consider two things in ceremonies: the trueth, whereto is annexed the efficacie: secondly, the externall vse. Furthermore, the abrogating of the externall vse, which Christ brought dependeth herevpon, in that he is the sound body, & that nothing was shadowed in times past, which is not fulfilled in him. This diffreth much from the falling away from the law, to shew the true ende thereof, that the figures may haue an end, and that the spirituall trueth thereof may alwaies be in force. Wherefore we see that they were malicious and vniust interpreters, who laid Apostacie to Paul his charge, though he dyd call awaie the faithfull from the externall woorshippe of the Lawe: And whereas they command Paul to make a vowe to that ende, that he may proue himselfe to be a keeper of the lawe, it tendeth to no other ende, sauing that he may testifie that he doth not detest the Lawe like a wicked Apostata, who did himselfe shake off the Lordes yoke, and moue others vnto the like rebellion.

That they ought not to circumsise. It was so indeede. For Paul taught
 1. Cor. 7. 19. that both Iewes and Gentiles were set at libertie. For these sentences
 Col. 2. 11. 16 are generall with him. Circumcision is nothing. Againe, we be circum-
 1. Cor. 10. 25. cised by Baptisme in Christ, not with circumcision made with handes.
 Againe, let no man iudge you in meate or drinke, or in choice of feasts,
 which are shadowes of thinges to come: but the body is in Christ. Again,
 whatsoeuer commeth into the shambles, and whatsoeuer is set before
 you, that eate, asking no question for conscience sake. Againe, Be not
 inwrapped againe in the yoke of bondage. Seeing that he spake thus e-
 uery where without exception, he freed the Iewes from the necessity
 of keeping the Law.

And least I stand too long vppon this, one place shall be sufficient,
 where

where he compareth the law to a Tutor, vnder which the olde church was, as in the childhood thereof. But now knowing the grace of Christe it is growen vp, that it may be free from ceremonies, in that place he speaketh vndoubtedlie both of the Iewes & Gentiles. Also when he saith, that the handwriting of the law, which did consist in decrees, is blotted out and nayled to the crosse by Christe, he setteth free the Iewes as well as the Gentiles from the ceremonies, which he calleth in that place decrees. But seeing that hee did not precisely reiecte ceremonies, in teaching that the comming of Christ did make an end of the observing thereof: that was no reuolting, as the enuious Iewes thought it to be. Neither were the Elders ignorant of Paul his libertie. Therefore seeing they vnderstand the matter very well, their meaning is to haue this alone made known to the rude and vnskilfull, that Paul meant nothing lesse, then to perswade the Iews to contemne the law. Therefore they beheld not the bare matter, but knowing what the common sort thought of Paul by reason of the reports, which went about concerning him, they seek to cure the same. Though I wote not whether this were more importunate then equal, which they required at Paul his hands. And by this it appeareth how preposterous the crueltie of men is in receiuing false reports and how fast a false opinion once rashly receiued, doth stick. It is certain that Iames and his fellowes in office did indeour to maintaine & defend Paul his good report, & to put away those lies which did hurt his estimation: yet let them doe what they can, they will speake euill of Paul. Vnlesse peradventure they were too slacke in the beginning, that they might gratifie their countrie men: so that they were not their own men afterward.

Gal. 2. 14.

22 *The multitude must needs come together.* The verb is a verbeneger, as if they should say, the multitude must of necessitie com together. For it had been an absurd thing that an apostle of such rare report should not come before the whole multitude of the faithfull. For if hee had eschewed the light and sight of people, the sinister suspicion might haue byn increased: Neuertheless we see how modestly the Elders behaued themselves in nourishing concord, when as they preuent the offence of the people in time, sauing that they beare too much peradventure with their infirmitie, in requiring a vow of Paul. But this moderation must be kept in the church, that the pastours bee in great authoritie, & yet that they rule not proudly as Lords, neither despise the rest of the body. For the distinction of orders, which is the bond of peace, ought not to be any cause of discension.

23 *Doe that which we say to thee.* The Elders seeme (as I said euen now) to be faine vnto a foolish pāpering through too much loue of their nation. But the manifest iudgement of that thing dependeth vpon the circumstances, which are hid fro vs at this day: yet they knew the wel. The whole body almost did consist vpon Iewes, so that they needed not to feare the offending of the Gentiles. For in other regions this was the cause of departure, because euery man was wedded to his own custome, & would prescribe a law to others. Furthermore they had at Ierusalem many things which might prouoke them to keepe the ceremonies of the law, so that

they had a greater excuse, if they did more slowly forsake them. And though their zeale wer not void of fault, yet as it was an hard matter to reform it, so it could not be don at a sodain. We see how this superstition was scarce in long time pulled from the apostles; & bicause new disciples came daily vnto the faith, the infirmities were nourished in all together. And yet notwithstanding we must not deny but that ignorance was coupled with obstinacie, which the Elders did neuertheless tollerate, least they shuld do more hurt by vsing violent remedies. I leaue it indifferent whether they did passe measure or no.

Hauiug a vow vpon them. Though these foure be reckoned among the faithful, yet their vow was superstitious. Wherby it appeareth that the apostles had much trouble in that nation, which was not only hardned in the worship of the law through long vs: but was also naturally malipart, & almost intractable. Though it may be that these men were as yet but nouices: & therefore their faith was yet but slender & scarce well framed, wherefore the doctors did suffer them to performe the vow which they had vnadvisedly made. As touching Paul, bicause he made this vow not moued therunto by his owne conscience, but for their sakes, with whose error he did bear, the case stood otherwise with him. Notwithstanding we must see, whether this were one of the indifferent ceremonies, which the faithful might omit or keep at their pleasure. It seemeth indeed to haue in it certain thinges, which did not agree with the profession of faith. But bicause the end thereof was thanksgiving (as we said before in the 18. cha.) & there was nothing in the rite it self repugnant to the faith of Christ? Paul did not doubt to descend thus far to make his religion known. Therefore Paul did that which he saith of himself elswhere: because he made himself a companion of those which followed the law, as if he himself were in subiection to the law. Finally hee was made all things to all men, that he might win all to wth wit; euen vnto the altars, so that he might pollute himselfe with no sacrifice vnder a colour of loue. It had not bin so lawfull for him to go vnto the solemne sacrifice of satisfaction. But as for this part of the worship of God, which consisted in a vow, hee might do it indifferently: so it were not done for religious sake, but only to support the weeke. But it was neither his intent to worship God with this rite, neither was his conscience tied, but he did freely submit himselfe to his weak brethren.

24 Which they haue heard of thee are nothing. They seem to perswade Paul to dissemble. For the rumor rose not vpon nothing, that he did call away the Iewes from the ceremonies, and that he did not walk in observing the law. But we must remember that which I said euen now, that it was sufficient for Paul and the Elders, if they could remove the slander which was vniustly raised, to wit, that he was a reuolt from the law: and there might a better opportunitie be offered shortly, than in purging himselfe hee might call them backe by little and little from their error. Neither was it good or profitable that Paull shoulde be counted an observer of the lawe any long time, as the disciples were then commonlie: for by this meanes a thick veile should haue been put before their eyes,

to darken the light of Christ.

Wherefore let vs know that Paul did not dissemble, but sincerely professe, that he did not hate the law: but that he did rather thinke reuerently of it. They will him to bestow cost together with them, because they were wont to put their money together, that they might offer sacrifice together.

25. And as concerning those which haue beleueed. They adde this, least they be thought to go about to take away or cal back that liberty which they had graunted to the gentiles, so that they may bee burdened with some prejudice. But in the meane season they seem to keep the Iewes in bondage, from which they set free the gentiles alone in plain words. I answer, forasmuch as the estate of al was like, like libertie was granted to both. But there is mention made of the Iewes, who were so addicted to their obseruations and ceremonies, that they woulde not take to themselves, that liberty which they might wel challenge. But the Apostles did by name prouide for the gentils, lest the Iews after their wonted custome, should reiect them as profane & vncleane, because they were neither circumcised, neither troubled vp in the worship of the lawe. Moreover, least I lade the paper with a superfluous repetition, let the readers repaire vnto the 15. chapt. where they shall find those things which appertain vnto the exposition of this decree.

Ch. 15. 25.

26. Then when Paul had taken the men, on the morrow being purified with the water, he entered into the temple, declaring the fulfilling of the daies of purification, & that an offering might be offered for every one of them.

27. And when the seuen dayes were nowe almost ended, certayne Iewes of Asia, when they sawe him in the Temple, mooued the people, and layde hands on him.

28. Crying, Men of Israel helpe: this is that man, which teacheth al men euery where against the people, & the lawe, and this place. Moreover, hee hath also brought Grecians into the Temple, and hath defiled this holy place.

29. For they had seene Trophimus an Ephesian in the citie with him, whom they thought Paul had brought into the Temple.

30. And all the whole citie was moued, and the people ranne together, and when they had caught Paul, they drew him out of the temple: & by and by the doores were shut.

26. Whereas some accuse Paule of subletie, as if hee did playe the Hypocrite; I haue before refuted this. Yet I doe not denie but that he graunted to do thus much at the request of the brethren, being thereto in a manner enforced. Therefore it hath more colour, and is (as they say) more disputable; that he was too easily intreated; and too ready to obey: and yet I doe not admit that which some men say, that it went not wel with Paul, because taking vpon him a new and vnwonted person, he did not so constantly as he was wont maintaine the liberty purchased by Christe. I confesse indeede that God doth oftentimes punish foolish purposes with vnhappy success: but I see not why this should be applied

to Paul, who through volũtary subiection sought to win the fauor of the rude & such as were not throughly instructed, that he might doe them good: being about to doe that, not willingly, but because he had rather yeeld to the brethren, the stick to his own iudgement. Furthermore, when he was once admitted, he might fitly haue passed ouer to moderate that zeale. His curtesie doth rather deserue great praise, in that he doth not only gently abase himself for the vnskilful peoples sake: but doth also obey their foolishnes, who did vnworthely, & against reason suspect him. He might wel haue reprobued the, because they had bin so ready to beleue reports contrarie to his estimation. In that he abstaineth, he sheweth great patience: in that he winneth their fauour so carefully, it is singular modesty. Moreouer, he might haue been more rough and rounde with Iames & his fellowes in office, because they had not bin more diligent to root out errors from among the people. For though it be certain that they taught faithfully: yet it may be that the sight of the temple, & the verie seate of the lawe did hinder them in defending the vse of libertie. But Paul whether he went from his right of his own accord, or whether he thinke that they see better what is expedient, then he, doth follow their counsel. And wheras false Nicodemites following this example of Paul, goe about to colour their treacherous dissimulation, whiles they pollute themselves with al filthines of popery; it needeth no long refutation. They boast that they do this to win the weake brethren, or that they follow their veine thus farre, as if Paul did yeeld to them in all things without choise. If being Iewes they should take vpon them according to the prescript of the law, to fulfil among the Iewes a vowe infect with no idolatrie, then might they proue themselves to be like Paul. Now for as much as they inwrappe themselves in grosse and altogether wicked superstitions, and that because they wil escape the crosse, what likelihood is that which they imagine?

27 *The Iewes which came from Asia.* It is certaine that these men were enemies to the name of Christ and of Christians, so that whiles Paul is bent to pacifie the faithful, he incurreth the rage of the enemies. Those of Asia are in deed the raisers of the tumult: but the minds of al the people were so corrupt with the hatred of him, that they al became partners in the furie. But this place teacheth, that we must not take it impatiently, if at any time our hope be frustrate, and our counsels which we haue taken with a right and holy affection fall not out well, that our actions may haue an happie end. We must attempt nothing, but with a good conscience and according to the Spirit of God. But and if things come not to passe as wee would euen then, let that inward feeling vphold vs, that we know that God alloweth our desire, though it be laide open to the reproches and mockes of men: neither let it repent vs of our gentlenes, if at any time the wicked reward vs otherwise than wee deserue.

28 *Men of Israel, Helpe.* They cry out as if they were in extreame danger, and they call vpon all men to helpe them, as if all religion were in hazard. Whereby we see with what furious hatred they were inflamed against

against Paul, onely because in shewing that the full and perfecte truth is found in Christ, he taught that the figures of the Law had an end. Now whereas they conceiue a false opinion hauing seene Trophymus, they do more bewray by this headlong lightnes how venomous they be. They accuse Paul of sacrilege. Why? because he brought into the Temple a man which was vncircumcised. But they laid a most cruell crime to the charge of an innocent through a false opinion. Thus the boldnesse of those men vseth commonly to bee preposterous, who are carried away with an opinion conceiued before. But let vs learne by such examples to beware of the distemperature of affections, and not to let light preiudices haue the raine; least we runne headlong vpon the innocent, being carried with blind force.

30 *And the Citie was moued.* Wee see in this place the vanitie of the common people, which count Paul a condemned man before euer they heare him. Whereas the citie is moued about godlines, it is no maruell: but this is a point of peruerse zeale and mad rashnes, in that they set themselues against Paule before they knowe his matter. For in this corruption of nature, frowardnes is ioined with foolishnes: so that those will readily of their owne accord make haste to maintaine an euil cause, who can hardly be moued with many exhortations to do well. This is a hard case, that the whole world should be armed against vs at a sodaine through the perswasion of a fewe: but seeing it pleaseth the Lorde it should bee so, let euery one of vs prepare himselfe by this and such like examples to suffer all manner assaults and to beare and abide albrunts.

31 *And as they sought to kill him, it was told the capitaine of the band, that all Ierusalem was on an vprore.*

32 *Who tooke with him streightway soldiers and vnder capitaines, and ranne downe vnto them. But they when they saw the chiefe capitaine and the soldiers, left smiting of Paul.*

33 *Then the chiefe capitaine drew neere, and tooke him, and commanded him to be bounde with two chaines, and hee asked what he was, and what he had done.*

34 *And some cried one thing and some another, among the people. And when he could not know the truth by reason of the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the campe.*

35 *And when he came to the staires, it happened that he was carried of the soldiers, because of the violence of the multitude.*

36 *For the multitude of people followed crying, Away with him.*

37 *And when Paul began to be carried into the campe, he saith to the capitaine, May I speake to thee? who said canst thou speake Greeke?*

38 *Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these dayes madest an vprore, and leddest into the wildernes sower thousand men, which were murderers?*

39 *And Paul saide, I verely am a man which am a Iewe, borne in Tharsus, a citizen of no vile Citie of Cilicia. But I beseech thee suffer me to speake to the people.*

40 And when he had giuen him leaue, Paul standing vpon the staires, beckoned with the hand vnto the people, and when there was made great silence, he spake in the Hebrew tongue, saying.

31 As they sought to kill him. Assuredly the force of sathan appeareth therein, in that he driueth the people headlong into such rage, that when they haue shut the doares of the Temple, being not content with meane punishment, they conspire to put Paul to death. Wee must thus thinke with our selues, that Sathan doth prick forward the enemies of godlinesse, least their rage how cruell and troublesome so euer it be, troubles vs. On the otherside appeareth the wonderfull goodnes of God, when as he raiseth vp the chiefe captaine at a sodaine, that hee may deliuer Paul from death. He himselfe thought vpon no such thing, but he came to appease the tumult which was raised among the people: but the Lord sheweth a more euident token of his prouidence, because Paul his life was deliuered from such present danger without mans counsell. Thus doth he suffer the faithfull not only to labor, but to be almost oppressed, that hee may deliuer them from death more wonderfully. Luke calleth him the chiefe captaine of the band improperly, seeing euery chiefe captaine was set ouer a thousand: which doth also appeare by the text, where he saith that the chiefe captaine tooke with him vndercaptaines.

32 And when they saw the chiefe captaine. Those whose furie neither the maiestie of God, ne yet the reuerence of the temple could once stay, begin to relent when they see a prophane man. Whereby it appeareth that they were set on fire rather with barbarous crueltie than zeale. Nowe whereas the chiefe captaine bindeth Paul with chaines, hee declareth thereby sufficiently that he came not to ease him. The vnbeleeuers wold attribute this to fortune: but the Spirit hath depainted out vnto vs the prouidence of God as in a table reigning amidst the confused vprores of men. And though this be very hard that this holy minister of God is so shamefully handled: yet the equitie of the chiefe captaine is to be commended, if hee bee compared with the Iewes. Hee bindeth him with chaines, as if he were some euill doer or some wicked person: yet doth he vouchsafe to heare him when he is bounde, whom they did beat vnmmercifully: neither doeth hee determin to handle him hardly before he knew his cause. Yea this was the best way to mitigate their crucky, because they thought that Paul should be punished immediatly.

34 Some cried one thing and some another. The madnesse of the raging people, doth bewray it selfe on euery side. They make horrible outcries, whereof one is contrary to another. Neuertheless they desire with one consent to haue him put to death, who was conuict of no offence. In the meane season we need not doubt but that they were blinded with a color of holy zeale: but the truth of the cause wel known, maketh me truly zealous, as it maketh them true martyrs of God: but rage bewraith diuellish madnes. Whereas mention is made in this place of the campe or fortress, we must know that the soldiars which were placed to gard the City, had a place which was trenched & fortified on euerie side, which they

they might defend as if it were a castle, & from which they might beat backe all assaults if any sedition were raised. For it had not been good for them to haue been dispersed here and there in diuers Innes, seeing the people were treacherous, and the Citie troublesome. And wee gather by this that the place was high, because Luke saith, that when they came to the steps, Paul was carried of the soldiers. And whether the soldiers did lift vp Paul on high that they might bring him safe to the station or campe, or he was thus tost with the violence of the crowde, this was no dutie of fauour. But the greater the crueltie of those which followed him was, God did more plainly declare that he was fauourable to his seruant in sparing his life, least if hee should haue been murdered in the tumult, his death should haue wanted due frute.

37. *May I speake vnto thee.* Paul offered himselfe to defend his cause which all the seruants of God must do. For wee must doe our indeuour to make our integritie knowne to all men least through our infamie the name of God bee blasphemed. But when the chief captain demandeth whether Paul be not that Egyptiā which was a murtherer, which a litle before had ledde away a companie of men, let vs learne that how modestly and quietly soeuer the ministers of Christ, behaue themselves, and howsoever they bee void of all fault, yet cannot they escape the reproches and slaunders of the worlde. Whiche thing wee must note for this cause, that wee maye acquaiht our selues with rebukes: and that in well dooyng wee may bee prepared too bee euill spoken of. When hee asketh him concerning the Egyptian, he meaneth not Theudas the forcerer, as some men falsly suppose: of whom Gamaliel made mention before in the fift Chapter, and of whom Iosephus speaketh more in his twentieth of antiquities. For besides that wee reade there that Theudas carried awaie onelie foure hundred menne, and the chiefe Captaine reckoneth vp in this place foure thousande, and saith that they were all murtherers: that is more, in that Theudas raised that faction during the reigne of Tiberius or Augustus Cæsar, whereof remained onlie an obscure report: because so soone as a troupe of horsemen was sent after them, they were forthwith destroyed. Notwithstanding it seemeth to me that Iosephus is deceiued in that where he saith first that Cuspius Fadus was sent by Claudius, and then hee addeth that Theudas was of him ouercome: seing I haue before shewed that that former insurrection was made at such time as Claudius was but a priuate man.

Ch. 5. 37.

Though he disagree much with Lukes narration euen in the number, seing he saith that there were about thirtie thousand made partners in the sedition: vnlesse happily we expound it thus, that after hee was put to flight by Felix, he fled into the wilderness with fower thousand. And it had bin an absurd thing that the number should be made ten times greater, as also that a troupe hauing no skill in warre or being altogether without courage shoulde haue bene defamed with the name of murderers. For as Iosephus doeth witnesse, that seducer had deceiued the simple and credulous common people with false promises, boasting

boasting that he was a prophet of God which would lead the people dry foote through the midst of Iordane. But the same Iosephus putteth the matter out of doubt, when hee saith that an Egyptian a prophet did gather together a band of men, vnder Fœlix the president and did carry them into mount Oliuet: whereof foure hundred were slaine, two hundred taken, and the residue dispersed. The historie was fresh in memorie. Againe, forasmuch as the authour of the sedition was escaped: & the region filled with murtherers; it is not without cause that the chiefe captaine demaundeth of Paul, when he seeth all men so hate him, whether he were that Egyptian. Luke recordeth no longer conference had betweene the chiefe captain and Paul: yet it is likely, forasmuch as both of them vnderstood the Greeke tong, that they had farther talk. Whereby it came to passe, that so soone as Paul had wel purged himself, he had licence graunted him to speake to the people. For the chiefe captaine would neuer haue suffered a wicked man to make any publik speech in a citie, which was so sore suspected.

CHAP. XXII.

- 1 **M**E N, Brethren and fathers, heare mine excuse which I make now before you.
- 2 And when they heard that he spake to them in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence. And he said,
- 3 I truly am a man a Iewe, borne in Tharsus a citie of Cilicia, and brought vp in this citie at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the Lawe of the fathers, and was zealous towards God as yee all are this day:
- 4 And I persecuted this way vnto death, binding & deliuering into prison both men and women:
- 5 As the chiefe priest doth beare me witnesse, and all the order of Elders. Of whom also I receiued letters vnto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there, bounde to Ierusalem that they might be punished.
- 2 Though wee may gesse by the beginning of this speech, what was Paul his drift: yet because he was interrupted, we know not certainelie what hee was about to say. The summe of that part which is restid is this, that, Forasmuch as he was well and faithfully instructed in the doctrine of the Law, he was a godlie and religious worshiper of God in the sight of the world. Secondly that hee was an enimie to the Gospell of Christ, so that hee was counted among the priests one of the principall maintainers and defenders of the Law. Thirdly that he did not change his sect vnaduisedly: but that being tamed and conuict by an Oracle from heauen, he gaue his name to Christ. Fourthly that he did not embrace vnknowne things, but that God appointed him a faithfull teacher, of whom he learned al things perfectly. Lastly that when he was returned to Ierusalem, and sought to doe good to his countremen, God did not

not permit him. So that he brought not the doctrine of saluation vnto forraigne nations without good consideration, or because hee hated his owne nation, but being commanded by God so to do.

Men, Brethren and fathers. It is a wonder that hee giueth so great honour yet to the desperate enemies of the Gospel: for they had broken al bonde of brotherly fellowship, and by oppressing the glory of God, had spoiled themselues of all titles of dignitie. But because Paule speaketh in this place as some one of the people, he speaketh so louingly vnto the bodie it selfe, and vseth towards the heads words honourable, without dissembling: and surely because their casting off was not made knowne as yet, though they were vnworthie of any honour, yet it was meete that Paul should reuerently acknowledge in them the grace of Gods adoption. Therefore in that he calleth them Brethren and Fathers, hee doth not so much regard what they haue deserued, as into what degree of honour God had exalted them. And all his Oration is so framed, that hee goeth about to satisfie them freely in deede and without flattering, yet humblie and meekely. Therefore let vs learne so to reuerence and honour men, that wee impaire not Gods right. For which cause the Popes pride is the more detestable, who seing hee hath made himselfe an high Priest without the commendement of God, and the consent of the Church: he doth not onely chalenge to himselfe all titles of honour, but also such tyrannie that hee goeth about to bring Christ in subiection, as if when God doeth exalt men, he did resigne vp his right and authoritie to them, and did stoupe downe to them.

Tha he spake Hebrue. This is in deede an vsuall thing, that when men which speake diuerse languages are together, we heare those more willingly who speake our owne language: but the Iewes were moued with an other peculiar cause, because they imagined that Paul was offended with his owne kinred, so that hee did euen hate their tongue, or that he was some roge which had not so much as learned the speech of that nation whereof he said he came. Nowe so soone as they heard their owne language, they beginne to haue some better hope. Furthermore it is vncertaine whether Paul spake in the Hebrew or in the Syrian tongue: for wee knowe that the speech of the Iewes was corrupt and degenerate after their exile, for as much as they had much from the Chaldeans and Sytians. For mine owne part I thinke, that because hee spake as wel to the common sort as vnto the Elders, he vsed the common speech which was at that day vsuall.

I am a Iewe. As all things were out of order at that day among the Iewes, manie rogues and vagabounds, to the ende they might haue some shrowd for their wickednesse, did falsely boast that they were Iewes. Therefore to the ende Paule may acquite himselfe of this suspicion, hee beginneth at his byrth: that done hee declareth that hee was knowne in Ierusalem, because he was brought vp there of a childe: though this latter thing seemeth to bee spoken not onely for certainties sake: but because it skilled much that this should also bee knowne, how well he had bin instructed.

There

There is nothing more bolde to cause trouble than vnlearned men. And at that day the gouernement of the Church was so decayed, that religion was not onely subiect to sectes, but also miserable mangled and torne in peeces. Therefore Paul nameth his master least any man may thinke that he had not bene noursled vp in learning, and therefore had hee forsaken the worshipping of the fathers. As many men who are not trained vp in learning, forget their nature and growe out of kinde. But Paul saith chiefly that he was well taught in the Law, that the Iewes may vnderstande, that it was not through ignorance (as it falleth out oftentimes) that hee causeth such adoe, and doeth counterfaite their monsters.

Chap. 5. 34.

It is to bee doubted whether this bee that Gamaliel of whom mention is made before. Schollars are saide to sit at their masters feete: because forasmuch as they bee not as yet of stronge and sound iudgement, they must bring such modestie and apynesse to bee taught, that they must make all their senses subiect to their masters, and must depende vpon their mouth. So Marie is saide to sit at Iesus his feete, when shee giueth eare to his doctrine. But and if such reuerence bee dew to earthly masters, howe much more ought wee to prostrate; our selues before the feete of Christ, that wee may giue eare to him when hee teacheth vs out of his heavenly throne? This speech doeth also put boyes and younge men in remembrance of their ductie, that they bee not stoute nor stubberne, or that they bee not puffed nor lifted vp against their masters through some foolish confidence; but that they suffer themselves quietly and gently to be framed by them.

Luk. 10. 39.

Taught in the Lawe of the Fathers. The olde interpreter doeth translate it worde for worde, Taught according to the trueth of the Fathers Lawe: sauing that *ἐκ πίστεως* is rather a perfect way than trueth. Notwithstanding the question is, What hee meaneth by this perfect way, seeing all of them had one and the same forme of the Lawe. Hee seemeth to mee to distinguish that purer forme of knowledge wherein hee had bene trayned vp, from the common instruction, which did more disagree with the true and naturall meaning of the Lawe. And although the Lawe of the Lorde was then corrupt by manie additions euen among the best Docters: yet because religion was altogether there corrupt among manie; Paul doeth for good causes boast that hee was both well and also diligently instructed in the Lawe of the Fathers: or (which is all one) Exactly or perfectly; least any man should thinke, that he had forgotten onely some smal smattering, as if he were one of the common sorte.

But because manie who are well taught, are notwithstanding full stufte with Epicurish contempt of God, hee declareth that hee was zealous towarde God: as if hee shoulde say that the serious studie of godlinesse was annexed to doctrine, so that hee meant not to dally in holy thinges, as prophane men doe of set purpose confounde all things,

But

But because this his zeale was altogether rash, hee maketh himself like to the other Iewes for that time. Notwithstanding this may be taken in good part, that he did long ago no lesse worship god from his heart then they did then.

4 *I persecuted this way.* This is the second point, that he was an enimie to Christ his doctrine: and that he was more seruient in resisting the same then all the rest, vntill hee was pulled backe by the hande of God: which thing hee sayeth the chiefe Priest and Elders can testifie. Therefore there can bee no suspition in such a sodaine change. Whereas hee saith, that hee had letters giuen him to deliuer to the bretheren, it must bee referred vnto the Iewes, as if hee had called them his countrie men: but hee meant to appease them with a more honourable tytle. For this is Paule his drifte, that hee may declare his naturall and lawfull beginnyng which hee tooke of that nation: and also howe desirous hee was to bee linked with them in friendship.

6 *And it happened that as I journeyed and drewe neere to Damascus about noone, that sodainely a greate light shone rounde about mee from Heauen.*

7 *And I fel to the ground, and heard a voyce saying to me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*

8 *And I answered, who art thou Lord? And he said to me, I am Iesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.*

9 *And they which were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voyce of him which talked with me.*

10 *Then I saide, what shall I doe Lorde? And the Lorde sayde to mee, Arise, and goe to Damascus, and there it shall bee tolde thee, what thinges bee ordayned for thee to doe.*

11 *And when I saw not by reason of the glory of the light, being led by the hand by those companions which were with me, I came to Damascus.*

6 *And it happened.* Because this historie was expounded mote at large in the ninth Chapter, I will onely briefly touch those thinges which were there spoken. But this is peculiar to this present place, that Paul reckoneth vp his circumstances, that by them he may proue that hee was conuerted by God. And this is the thirde member of the Sermon: otherwise this chaunge shoulde haue beene thought to haue proceeded of inconstancie, or rashnesse, or else it shoulde not haue beene voide of some infamie. For nothing is more intollerable than to start aside from the course of godlinesse which men haue once entred: and also not to doe that which they are commaunded to doe. Therefore least any man might suspect Paul his conuersion, hee proueth by many myracles which hee bringeth to light, that God was the authour thereof. In the night season there appeare oftentimes lightnings, which come of the hoate exhalations of the earth: but this was more strange, that about noone a sodayne light did not onely appeare, but did also

also compasse him about like a lightening, so that through feare thereof he fell from his horse, and lay prostrate vpon the ground. Another miracle, in that he hard a voice frō heauen: another, in that his cōpanions heard it not as well as hee. Also there folow other things, that after that hee was sent to Damascus the euent is correspondent to the oracle: because Ananias commeth to meet him. Also in that his sight is restored to him in a moment.

I fell to the earth. As Paul was puffed vp with Pharisaiical pride, it was meet that he should be afflicted and throwen down, that he might hear Christ his voice. He would not haue despiced God openly, neither durst he refuse the heauenly oracle: yet his mind should neuer haue been framed vnto the obedience of faith, if he had cōtinued in his former state: therefore he is throwen down by violence, that hee may learn to humble himselfe willingly. Furthermore, there is in Christe his woordes onely a brieft reprehension, which serueth to appease the rage of Paul beeing so cruelly bent. Néuerthelesse wee haue thence an excellent consolation, in that Christe taking vpon him the person of all the Godlie, doth complaine that whatsoeuer iniurie was done to them, was done to him. And as there canne no sweeter thing bee imagined to lenifie the bitternesse of persecution, then when wee heare that the sonne of God doth suffer not onelie with vs, but also in vs: so againe the bloody enemies of the Gospell, who being nowe befottered with pride, do mocke the miserable Church, shal perceiue whom they haue wounded.

9. *They which were with mee.* It shewed in the other place that there is no such disagreement in the woorde of Luke, as there seemeth to bee. Luke said there, that though Paul his companions stood amazed, yet heard they a voyce. But in this place he saith they heard not the voyce of him which spake to Paul, though they saw the light. Surely it is no absurd thing to say that they heard some obscure voyce. Yet so that they did not discern it as Paul himselfe, whom alone Christ meant to staye and tame with the reprehension. Therefore they heare a voyce, because a sound doth enter into their eares, so that they knowe that some speaketh from heauen, they heare not the voyce of him that spake to Paul, because they vnderstand not what Christ saith. Moreouer they see Paul compassed about with the light, but they see none which speaketh from heauen.

10. *What shall I doe Lord?* This is the voyce of a tamed man, and this is the true turning vnto the Lord, when laying away all fearcenesse and furie, wee bowe downe our neckes willingly to beare his yoke, and are readie to doe whatsoeuer he commaundeth vs. Moreouer this is the beginning of well doing, to aske the mouth of God. For their labour is lost who thinke vpon repentance without his worde. Furthermore in that Christ appointeth Ananias to bee Paule his master, hee doth it not for any reproch, or because he refuseth to teach him: but by this meane he meaneth to set forth and also to bewtifie the outward ministerie of the Church.

And

And euen in the person of one man he teacheth vs that we must not grudge to heare him speake with the tongue of men. To the same end tendeth that which followeth immediatly, that he was blind, vntill offering himselfe to become a scholar, he had declared the humilitie of his faith. God doth not in deed make blind all those whom he will lighten: but there is a general rule prescribed to al men, that Those became foolish with themselves, who will be wise to him.

- 12 *And one Ananias a godly man according to the Law, approued by the testimonie of all the Iewes which dwelt there,*
 13 *Comming vnto me and standing by me, said to me, Brother Saul, receiue thy sight. And I receiuing my sight the same houre saw him.*
 14 *But hee saide to mee, The God of our fathers hath prepared thee that thou mightest knowe his will, and see the iust, and heare a voyce from his mouth.*
 15 *Because thou shalt be his witnesse before all men of those things which thou hast scene and heard.*
 16 *And now why stayest thou: Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, in calling vpon the name of the Lord.*

12 *One Ananias.* Paul proceedeth now vnto the fouerth point: to wit that he did not onely giue his name to Christ being astonied with myracles: but that hee was also well and thoroughly instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel. I haue already saide that Ananias met Paul not by chance, but through the direction of Christ. And whereas he giueth him the title of godlinesse as concerning the Lawe, and saith that hee was well reported off by the whole nation, in these words he preuenteth the wrong opinion which they might conceiue. As they loathed the Gentiles so they would neuer haue allowed any teacher comming from them. And one that had reuolted from the Law should haue ben most detestable. Therefore he witnesseth that he worshipped God according to the Law, and that his godlines was knowne and commended among all the Iewes, so that they ought not to suspect him. These wordes according to the Law are ignorantly by some coupled with the text following, that he was approued according to the Law. For Ananias his religion is rather distinguished by this marke from the superstitions of the Gentiles. Though we must note, that the Law is not mentioned to establish the merits of works, that they may be set against the grace of God: but Ananias his godlinesse is clearely acquitted of al euil suspicion which might haue risen among the Iewes. And seing that he restoreth sight to Paul with one word: it appeareth thereby that he was sent of God, as I haue said before.

14 *The God of our fathers.* As nothing is more fit to prouoke vs ioyfully to goe forward toward God, than when wee knowe that God doeth preuent vs with his free goodnesse, that hee may call vs backe from destruction to life: so Ananias beginneth heere. God saith he, hath ordained thee to knowe his will: for by this meanes Paul is taught that God

had respect vnto him at such time as he went astray, and was altogether an enimie to his owne saluation: and so Gods predestination doth abolish all preparations which Sophisters imagine, as if man did preuent Gods grace by his owne free will. In calling him the God of the Fathers, hee reneweth the remembrance of the promises, that the Iewes may know that the newe calling of Paul is ioyned with them: and that those fall not away from the Lawe, who passe ouer vnto Christ. Therefore Paul confirmeth that by these wordes which hee auouched before in his owne person, that hee had not made any departure from the God of Abraham, whome the Iewes had in times passed worshipped: but that hee continueth in the aunient worshippe which the Fathers did vse, which hee had learned out of the Lawe. Wherefore when the question is about religion, let vs learne by the example of Paule, not to imagine any newe God (as the Papistes and Mahometistes haue done, and as all heritikes vse to doe) but let vs retaine that God who hath reuealed himselfe in times past to the Fathers, both by the Lawe, and also by diuerse Oracles. This is that antiquitie wherein wee must remaine, and not in that whereof the Papistes boast in vaine, who haue inuented to themselves a straunge God, seeing they haue forsaken the lawfull Fathers.

The same is to bee said at this day of the Iewes, whose religion seing it disagreeeth with the Lawe and the Prophets, their God must also bee degenerate and feigned. For hee who would in times past be called the God of Abraham and of the fathers, appeared at length in the person of his sonne, that hee may now be called by his owne name, or title the Father of Christ. Therefore he which reiecteth the sonne, hath not the father, who cannot bee seperated from him. And Ananias saith that it cometh to passe through the free Election of God, that the truth of the Gospell doeth now appeare to Paule: whereupon it followeth that he did not attaine vnto this by his owne industrie, which the experience of the thing did also declare. For nothing was more stubberne than Paule, vntill Christ did tame him: And if wee desire to knowe the cause and beginning, Ananias calleth vs backe vnto the counsell of God, whereby hee was appointed and ordained, and assuredlie it is a more precious thing to knowe the will of God, then that men can attaine vnto it by their owne industrie. That which Ananias affirmeth of Paul ought to bee translated vnto all, that the treasure of faith is not common to all: but it is offered peculiarly to the Elect. Furthermore it appeareth more plainly by the next member what this will of God is: for God spake at sundrie times and many wayes, by his Prophetes, but last of all hee reuealed and made knowne his will and himselfe whollie in his sonne.

To see the iust. Seeing all the Greeke bookes in a manner agree together in the Masculine gender: I wonder why Erasmus would rather translate it in the Neuter, Which is Iust: which sense the readers see to be bolde and farre fer. Therefore I doe not doubt but that Iust is taken in this place for Christ: and the text runneth very finely thus: because

it followeth immediatly after, & I heare a voice from his mouth. And it is certaine that all the godly and holy men did most of all desire that they might see Christ. Thence flowed that confession of Simeon, Lord now lettest thou thy seruāt depart in peace: because mine eyes haue scene thy saluation. Therefore this seeing, which godly kings and prophets did most earnestly desire, as Christ himselfe doeth witnesse, is not without cause extolled as a singular benefite of God. But because the sight of the eyes should profite little or nothing, which wee knowe was to manie deadly, hee adioyneth the hearing of the voice. Ananias setteth downe the cause why God did vouchsafe Paul of so great honour, to wit, that hee might be to his sonne a publike witnesse: and hee doth so prepare him, that he may learne not onely for himselfe alone: but that he may haue so much the more care to profite, because he shalbe the teacher of all the whole Church.

Luce. 2. 29.

Luk. 10. 24.

16 And now why tarriest thou? It is not to be doubted but that Ananias did faithfully instruct Paul in the principles of godlinesse: for he would not haue baptized him if hee had beene voide of true faith. But Luke passeth ouer many things, and doth briefly gather the summe. Therefore seeing Paul doth vnderstand that the promised redemption is now giuen in Christ: Ananias saith for good causes that nothing ought to stay him from being Baptized. But when hee saith, why tarriest thou? hee doeth not chide Paule, neither doeth hee accuse him of slackenesse: but hee doeth rather amplifie the grace of God by adding Baptisme. The like sentence had wee in the tenth Chapter, Can any man let those from being Baptized with water, who haue the holy Ghost giuen them euen as wee? But when hee saith, Wash away thy sinnes: by this speech hee expresth the force and fruite of Baptisme: as if hee had saide, Wash away thy sinnes by Baptisme. But because it may seeme that by this meanes more is attributed to the outwarde and corruptible element than is meete. The question is whether Baptisme bee the cause of our purging. Surely for as much as the bloode of Christ is the onely meanes whereby our sinnes are washed away: and as it was once shedde to this ende, so the holy Ghost by the sprinkling thereof through faith doeth make vs cleane continually, this honour cannot be translated vnto the signe of water, without doing open iniurie to Christ and the holy Ghost: and experience doeth teach howe earnestly men be bent vnto this superstition. Therefore manie godly men, least they put confidence in the outwarde signe, doe ouermuch extenuate the force of Baptisme. But they muste keepe a measure, that the Sacramentes may bee kept within their bounds, least they darken the glorie of Christ: and yet they may not want their force and vse. Wherefore wee must holde this, first that it is God alone who washeth vs from our sinnes by the blood of his sonne: and to the ende this washing may be effectuell in vs, he worketh by the hidden power of his Spirit. Therefore when the question is concerning remission of sinnes, wee must seeke no other authour thereof, but the heauenlie Father:

Cha. 10. 47.

we must imagine no other materiall cause, but the blood of Christ, and whē we be com to the formal cause, the holy ghost is the chief: but ther is an inferiour instrument and that is the preaching of the word & baptisme it self. But though God alone doth worke by the inward power of his Spirite, yet that doth not hinder, but that he may vse at his pleasure such instruments and meanes as he knoweth to be conuenient, nor that he includeth in the element any thing which he taketh either from his spirite or from the blood of Christ, but because he will haue the signe it selfe to be an helpe for our infirmitie.

Therefore forasmuch as Baptisme doth helpe our faith that it may reape forgiuennesse of sinnes by the blood of Christ alone, it is called the washing of the soule. So that the washing spoken of by Luke, doeth not note out the cause: but is referred vnto the vnderstanding of Paul, who hauing receiued the signe, knew better that his sinnes were done away. Though we must also note this, that there is no bare figure set before vs in Baptisme, but that the giuing of the thing is therto annexed: because God promisseth nothing deceitfully, but doth indeed fulfill that whiche vnder the signes he doth signifie. Notwithstanding we must again beware that we tie not the grace of God to the sacraments, for the external administration of baptisme profiteth nothing, saue only where it pleaseth God it shall. By this there is also an other question aunswared which may be moued. For seeing Paul had the testimonie of the grace of god, his sinnes were already forgiuen him. Therefore he was not washed onlie by baptisme, but he receiued a new confirmation of the grace which he had gotten.

In calling vpon the name of the Lord. It is out of question that he meaneth Christ, not because the name of Christ alone is called vpon in baptiswe, but because the father commandeth vs to aske of him whatsoeuer is figured in baptism: neither doth the operatiō of the Spirit tend to any other end sauing that it may make vs partakers of his death & resurrection. Therefore Christ is appointed to excell in baptism: yet in as much as he is giuen vs of the father, and in as much as he powreth out his graces vpon vs by the holy Ghost. Whereby it commeth to passe that the calling vpon the name of Christe, containeth both the Father and the Sonne.

Wherefore Ananias doth not meane, that the name of Christe must only bee named: but hee speaketh of prayer, whereby the faithfull doe testifie, that the effect of the outward signe is in the power of Christe alone. For the sacraments haue neither anie power of saluation included in them, neither are they any thing worth of themselues. Wherefore this member is as it were a correction of the former saying, because Ananias doth in plaine words send Paul from reposing confidence in the external signe, vnto Christ.

It is well known howe much the Papistes differ from this rule, who tye the cause of grace to their exorcismes and inchauntments: & they are so farre from studyng to direct the miserable people vnto Christ,

that

that they rather drown Christ in Baptisme, and pollute his sacred name by their enchantments.

17 And it came to passe that when I was returned to Ierusalem, and prayed in the Temple, I was in a trance.

18 And saw him say to me, Make haste, and get thee quicklie out of Ierusalem: because they will not receiue thy testimony concerning me,

19 Then I saide, Lord, they know that I did cast into prison, and did beat in euery synagogue those which did beleene in thee.

20 And when the blood of thy witnesse Steephen was shed, I did also stande by and consented to his death, and kept the rayment of those which slewe him.

21 And he said vnto me, Goe: because I wil send thee farre hence vnto the Gentiles.

22 And they heard him vnto this word, then they lifted vp their voice saying, Away with such a fellow from off the earth: for it is not meete that he should liue.

17 And it came to passe. This had not bene the last conclusion, if Paul had not bene cut off with their outragious outcries. Notwithstanding his drift and purpose doeth plainly appeare by the former text: for he beginneth to intreat of his ministerie, that hee may shewe that hee departed not from the Iewes of his owne accorde, as if hee withdrew him of malice from taking paines with them: but he was drawne vnto the Gentiles contrary to his expectation and purpose. For he came purposely to Ierusalem, that hee might impart with his owne nation that grace which was committed to him. But when the Lorde cutteth off his hope which hee had to doe good, hee driueth him thence. But there was a double offence which Paule goeth about to cure: for they both thought that the covenant of God was prophaned; if the Gentiles should bee admitted into the Church together with them; and nothing did grieue the proude nation so much, as that others should bee preferred before them, or so much as made equall with them. Therefore Paule his defense consisteth in this, that hee was readie, so much as in him laid, to doe them the best seruice he could: but he was afterward enforced by the commaundement of God to goe to the Gentiles, because hee would not haue him to bee idle at Ierusalem. Whereas Erasmus translateth it, That I was carried without my selfe, is in Greeke worde for worde, That I was in a trance: whereby he meant to purchase credite to the Oracle. Also the circumstance of the time and place doeth confirme the same; in that the Lorde appeared to him as hee prayed in the Temple: which was an excellent preparation to heare the voyce of God. Concerning the manner of seeing, reade that which wee touched about the ende of the seuenth Chapet.

18 Because they will not. Though the commaundement of God alone ought to be sufficient ynough to binde vs to obey, yet to the ende Paul

might be the more willing to followe, Christ sheweth him a reason why hee will haue him depart out of Ierusalem: to wit, because hee shoulde loose his labour there: but he was not chosen to that end, that he might be idle, or doe no good by teaching: though this were a sore triall, and such as we may thinke did sore shake him. Not long before the function of preaching the Gospel was enioyned him, that his voice might sound throughout the whole world: now euen at the first entrance he is inhibited: yea his labour seemeth to be condemned of peculiar reproch, when his witnesse is reiected, because his person is hated. But it was meete that the holy seruant of the Lord should bee thus humbled, that all the preachers of the Gospell might learne to giue ouer themselues whollie to obey Christ, that when they bee excluded from one place, they may be ready immediatly to go to another, and that they may not be discouraged nor cease off from doing their ducie though they be vnderferuedly loathed.

19 *Lord they know.* By this speech Paul doeth testifie that he was not beside himselfe or brought into perplexitie, but that hee did assuredlie beleue the Oracle. For without doubt he knewe Christ whom he calleth Lord. And Paul obiectioneth, that it cannot almost be, but that when they see him so sodainly chaunged, such a spectacle will moue them. Whence he gathereth that hee shall not be vnfruitfull. Hee thought so in deede: but Christ answereth flatly that he hath appointed him another charge: and hee taketh from him the hope which hee had in vaine conceiued touching the Iewes. The question is whether it were lawfull for Paul, to obiection these reasons to Christ: for it is as much as if he did auouch that that is probable, which Christ saide coulde not be. I answer, that God giueth his saintes leaue, familiarly to vtter their affections before him: especially when they seeke no other thing but the confirmation of their faith.

If any man stand in his own conceit, or stubbernelly refuse that which God commaundeth, his arrogancie shall be worthily condemned: but God vouchsafeth his faithfull seruants of a singular priuilege, that they may modestly obiection those things which may call them backe from the desire to obey: to the end that being free from lets, they may wholly addict themselues to serue God: as Paul, after that he was taught that it pleased the Lord that it should be so, he doth not gaine say nor contend any longer: but being content with that one exception, and making an end there, he maketh himselfe ready to take his iorney, which he seemed to be loth to take. In the meane season whereas the Iewes are not touched with so many myracles, their stubbernes and pride which can not be tamed, is discovered. Which vpbraiding did vndoubtedly cause them to rage.

22 *Away with such a fellowe.* Luke sheweth heere howe outragiously Paul his sermon was interrupted. For they doe not onely oppresse him with their crying, but they desire to haue him put to death: where it doeth also plainelie appeare howe frensie pride is. The Iewes conceiued so great good liking of themselues, that they did not onely de-

spice all the whole worlde in comparison of themselves, but they stood also more stoutly in defense of their owne dignitie then of the Lawe it selfe: as if a religion did consist in this, that Abraham his stocke might excell all other mortall men. So now they rage against and raile vpon Paul, because hee saide that hee was sent to bee the Apostle of the Gentiles: as if God were bounde by his owne liberalitie to suffer the contempt of his power in the wicked and vnthankfull, on whom he bestowed excellent graces aboue all other. And it is no maruell if there were suche fiercenesse and fury at that day among the Iewes, seeing that being by all meanes wasted, and accustomed to suffer extreme reproches at this daye, they cease not notwithstanding to swell with seruile pride. But these be fruites of reprobation, vntil God gather together the remnant according to Paul his prophetic.

Rom. 11. 5.

- 23 *And as they cried, and cast off their garments, and shrewe dust into the ayre:*
- 24 *The chiefe captaine commanded him to be led into the campe: and hee commanded that he should bee scourged, and examined, that hee might knowe for what cause they cried so on him.*
- 25 *And when they had bounde him with thonges, Paul said to the Centurion that stood by: Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Romaine and vndercondemned?*
- 26 *When the Centurion heard that, he went to the chiefe captaine, and told him saying, what wilt thou doe? For this man is a Romaine.*
- 27 *And when the chiefe captaine came, he said to him, Tell mee, art thou a Romaine? And he said, yea.*
- 28 *And the chiefe captaine answered, with a great summe I purchased this freedom. And Paul said: I was so borne.*
- 29 *Then those who were about to examine him, departed from him immediatly. And the chiefe captaine also was afraid, after that he knew that he was a Romaine, and that he had bound him.*
- 30 *And on the next day when hee would know the truth, he loosed him from his bonds & commanded the high priests & al the Counsaile to come together, and hee brought Paul and set him before them.*

24 *The chiefe captaine.* It was well and wisely done of the chiefe captaine, thus to withdraw Paul from the sight of the people: forasmuch as his presence did moue and more prouoke them who were alreadye too much mooued. For by this meanes he prouideth for the life of the holie man, and partly appeaseth the madnesse of the people. But when he commaundeth him to be scourged, to whose charge hee hearde no certayne crime laide, hee seemeth to deale vniustly: and yet this iniurie was not without colour: because it was likely that it was not without cause, that all the people had conspired to putte one manne to death. Therefore a vehement presumption was the cause of so straite examination. But we must note that this is a common custome among politike menne, that they bee iust iudges so farre as is expedient for

them: but if they be called away by profite, then they go out of the way. Neuerthelesse it is sufficient for them to colour this their wickednesse with the title of wisdome, because they hold that generall principle, that the world cannot be gouerned without some shewe or colour of iustice. But in all actions that subtiltie whereof I spake doth preuaile, that they consider rather what is profitable, then what is equall and right.

25 *Is it lawfull.* He alleageth first the priuiledge of the citie, then he defendeth himselfe by common lawe. And though there were more weight in the second point (to wit, that it is not lawfull to scourge a man before his cause is heard) yet should he haue preuailed nothing, vlesse the centurion had been more moued with the honour of the Romaine Empire, for nothing was then more hainous thē to doe any thing which was contrarie to the libertie of the people of Rome. Valerius his law, the law of Porcius and of Sempronius & such like did forbid that no man should doe any violence to the body of the citie of Rome without the commaundement of the people. The priuiledge was so sure and holy that they thought it to be not only a deadly offence: but also such an offence as could not be purged, that a citizen of Rome should bee beaten.

Therefore Paul escaped rather by the priuiledge then by comon equitie, yet did he not dout in a good cause to beare of the iniurie which was prepared for him, with this buckler of the citie. But wee must know that he did so alleage the right & priuiledge of the citie, that the chief captain was brought to belecue him: because his words should not haue been credited vnlesse he had vsed some proof. Moreouer it was no hard matter for a man who was well knownen to bring foorth witneses. Wee alleaged a cause in the sixteenth chapter, why he suffered himself to be scourged at Philippos, which he now preuenteth by his owne declaration: to wit, because hee shoulde not haue been heard in a tumult raised among the common people. But because he hath nowe to deale with the souldiers of Rome, who did behaue themselues more moderately and grauely, he vseth the opportunitie.

26 *This man is a Romaine.* Some man may maruel that he was so credulous, who was appointed to be chiefe in examining Paul, that he doth affirme the thing, as if hee knew it to be so. For if hee ought to belecue Paul his wordes, euery malefactor might by this shift haue escaped punishment. But this was their manner of dealing, hee which did say that he was a citizen of Rome, vnlesse hee could bryng in some which knewe hym, or proue it lawefull, hee was punished. For it was death for any man to pretend the freedome of the citie falsly. Wherefore the Centurion referreth the matter vnto the chiefe captaine, as doubting thereof: and he (as wee haue said) doth streightway examine the matter more thoroughly. And though Luke doeth not expresse by what testimonies Paul did proue himselfe to bee a citizen of Rome: yet vndoubtedly the chiefe captaine knewe the truth of the matter before he loosed him.

Cha. 16. 37.

28 With a great summe. The chiefe captaine obiection this to refute him: as if he shoulde say, that the freedome of the citie is not so common, and easily to be obtained. How can it be that thou beeing some base fellowe of the countrie of the Cilicians, shouldest obtayne this honour, for which I paid sweetly? Whereas Paul maketh answere, that he was free borne, who neuer saw the citie, yea whose father it may be, was neuer there, there is no cause why this should trouble any man. For those who are skilfull in the Romaine historie, knowe that certayne were made free of the citie, who dwelt in the prouinces, if hauing deserved well of the common wealth; or in warre, or in other waighty affaires; they did desire and chaue this rewarde of the deputies: so that it is no absurdity to say that he was borne a Citizen of Rome, who descending by his anectors of some prouince farre distant from Rome, did neuer set foote in Italy. Notwithstanding the question is howe this can hang together, that the chiefe captaine was afraide, because hee had bounde a Citizen of Rome, and yet he did not loose him from his bondes vntill the morrowe. It may be that he deferred it till the next daye, least he shoulde shew some token of feare. Notwithstanding, I thinke that the chiefe captaine was afraide because Paul was bounde at his commaundement, that he might be scourged, because this was to do iniurie to the bodie of a Citizen of Rome, and to breake the common liberty: and that it was lawfull to put a Romaine in prison.

CHAP. XXIII.

- 1 **A**ND Paul beheld the Councel stedfastly and said: Men & brethren, I haue serued God vntill this day in all good conscience.
- 2 And the high Priest Ananias commanded those that stood by him, to smite him on the face.
- 3 Then Paul saide to him: God will smite thee thou painted wall. And thou sittest iudging according to Lawe: and transgressing the Lawe. Commaundest thou me to be smitten?
- 4 And those which stood by, said: Railest thou on Gods high priest?
- 5 And Paul saide, I wist not brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speake euill of the ruler of thy people.

1 **L**ooking earnestly: Paul beginneth with the testimonie of a good conscience: that al the whole multitude may vnderstand, that he is vniustly charged with such an hainous offence, as if he had gone about to overthrow the woorshippe of God. It may be indeed that a man may offend of ignorance, who will not otherwise be a contemner either of God or of religion: but Paul meant at the first only with this excuse to mollifie their netled mindes, that he might the better be heard. For it had byn in vaine for him to haue defended himselfe, so long as that opinion did sticke in the mindes of the priests, that he was a wicked reuolt. Therefore before he enter the cause, hee excuseth himselfe of that tyme:

not

not onely that he may purchase fauour by that desire which he had to liue godlily, but also that he may preuent false accusations, or at least that he may refute vniust preiudices which might haue made against him, wherewith he saw the whole multitude infected and corrupted. We know not what he meant to say besides. Notwithstanding this preface teacheth that no man can rightly handle the doctrine of godlines, vnlesse the feare of God reigne and beare the chief sway in him. And now though hee giue not the priestes so honorable a title heere, as hee did a little before when he stood vppon the steppes of the fortress: yet he calleth them brethren, giuing them that honour: not because they deserue it, but that hee may testifie that hee is not the cause of the breache of friendship.

2 *And the chiefe priest.* Luke his narration seemeth not to agree with the vsuall history. For Iosephus writeth thus concerning the high priestes of that time, that Quadratus deputie of Syria deposing Cumanus from the gouernment of Iudea, commanded him to answere for himselfe before Cæsar, and sent Ananias the highest priest bound with him, into whose place who was chosen he maketh no mentiõ: sauing that it is likely that Ionathas had the honour giuen him, who as he reporteth, was afterward slaine by the subtlety and trechery of Felix Deputie of Iudea, wh succeeded Cumanus. For when he had oftentimes told Felix part of his minde, and he coulde not away with the constancie of the man: he made a compact with one Doras, that hee shoulde priuily conuey in murtherers to slea him. Then, as the same Iosephus doth witnesse, King Agrippa made Ismael the sonne of Phebeus priest. But when he was sent by the people to Rome about a certaine suite, and was kept there by Popea wife to Nero, Agrippa putteth in his place one Iosephus, whose name was Chabus, the sonne of Simon. But immediatly being also weary of him, he appointeth Ananus the sonne of Ananus to be high priest.

Furthermore, he saith, that this last thing happened at suche time as after the death of Festus, Albinus did succede him. And I see not why some call this Ananus Ananias. That hath indeed some colour, in that he is called a pharisee: also in that it is said that he was bold and stout, who wythout any lawfull authoritie caused Iames the Lords brother to be stoned. But if we giue credaunce to Iosephus, he coulde not bee that Ananias of whome mention is made in this place by Luke, who was then made priest, when manye yeeres were past and gone, after that Felix departed out of the prouince. I haue another coniecture in my head. For there flourished during all that time one Ananias an high priest, who excepting the title of honour, was almost chiefe in the order. And because Iosephus leaueth some voyde time betweene Ananias and Ismael, it may be that this manne had the roome of the highest priest in the meane time. But though this were not so, it appeareth out of Iosephus, that Ananias who died when the Citie was besieged, was in the reigne of Claudius Cæsar and Nero equall in dignity with the chiefe priestes which were then.

Yea his authoritie is so highly extolled, as if he had had the chiefe gouernement, howsoeuer other men did beare the insignes of honour. Againe hee is called *archiereus* confusedly, as those who were the highest Priests. Now let the readers ponder and consider, whether the word *archiereus* doth not rather signifie in this place Chiefe, than Highest, as it doth in many other places. For the Euangelists do euery where call the Priests who were of the Course of Aaron, *archiereis*, that they may distinguish them from the Leuites, who had a more inferiour degree of Priestthoode. Moreouer it may bee that that Ananias who was counted stout and couragious, did supplie the high Priests roome in his absence. Those things which wee haue recited out of Iosephus, are recorded partly in the twentieth booke of Antiquities, from the third Chapter, vntill the eight: partly in the seconde booke of the warres of the Iewes.

¶ He commanded him to be smiten. We see that there was in this assembly great distemperature. For whereas the high Priest was in such rage that hee commaunded Paule to bee smiten for nothing, hee did it vndoubtedly with the consent of all the rest: yea to the ende hee might winne the fauour of madde men. The Lorde doeth suffer the wicked to be so carried away by Sathan, that they fall from all shew of equitie and temperance. For hypocrites woulde faine beare some shewe of moderation: and vndoubtedly this high Priest went about to pretende such grauitie as did beseeme his person. But the Lord did plucke this visage from his face, so that there was not founde in him so much as the modestie of a meane man, but hee powred out his furious force like a beast.

In the meane season wee see what horrible and filthy disorder there was at that day in the Church. Ananias, who was the chiefe of the counsell, whereas he ought to haue stayed others by his grauitie: forgetting all modestie, he enforceth them vnto violence and sauagenesse. Therefore they had at that day no regarde of discipline: but there remained among them confused barbarisme. And no maruell for they had estranged themselves from God: they had most reprochfully reiected Christ: all their religion was set to sale: therefore it was meete that they should runne headlong into furious madnes, which might bee loathsome euen among prophane men, that they might be punished in their own shame, for their vngodlinesse.

3 God shall smite thee. Paul cannot put vp that iniurie, but hee must at least with sharpe wordes reprehende the high Priest, and denounce Gods vengeance vnto him. For it is no curse as appeareth sufficiently by the Greeke text: but rather a reprehension, ioyned with the denouncing of a punishment. If any man obiekt, that Paule did not vse that modestie, which Christ commaundeth his to vse, when he commaundeth them after they haue receiued a blowe on the left cheeke to turne the right cheeke also: we may readily answere, that Christ doth not in these wordes require silence, whereby the wickednesse and forwardnesse of the wicked may bee nourished: but he doeth onely bridle their

Mat. 5. 39

their mindes; that they may not take that iniury which they haue already receiued, impatiently. Christ will haue those that be his to be ready to suffer another iniury, after that they haue already receiued one: and by this meanes hee represseth all desire of reuenge. This is a briebe and true definition of patience which becometh all the faithfull, that they breake not out into wrathfulnesse, that they doe not one euill turne for another: but that they ouercome euill with goodnesse. But this is no let but that they may complaine of those iniuries which they haue suffered; but that they may reprove the wicked, and cite them to the iudgement seat of God: so they do this with quiet and calme minds: and secondly without euill will and hatred: as Paule appealeth in this place vnto gods iudgment seat, that the high priest may not flatter him selfe in his tyranny. Therefore he accuseth him, because hee breaketh the Law, from which (as he pretendeth) he hath his authoritie: whence he gathereth, that he shall not escape vnpunished. If any man being ouercome with impatience, doe but murmur, he shall not be blamelesse: But a manifest and sharpe accusation, if it proceed from a quiet minde, doth not passe the bounds set downe by Christ. If any man say, that it is mixed with railing, I answer, that we must alwayes maie with what affection the words be vttered. Christ pronounceth that man to be worthy to be punished by the councell, who shall only say to his brother, Racha: and as for him who shall say, thou foole, hee maketh him subiect to a more heauie iudgement. But if opportunitie be offered to reprove, we must oftentimes rephend sharply. Whereby it appeareth, that this only was Christ his drift, to keep back his, first from all indignation, secondly from speaking any thing in despite of any man. Therefore let vs be ware of railing, and then we may not only note in our brethren foolishnesse, but also it shall bee lawefull for vs to expresse their offences by their names when need shall bee. So Paul did not speake for his owne sake, that he might with sharpe words requite the iniury done to him by the high priest: but because he was a minister of the word of god, he wold not wink at an offence which did deserue sharp & serious reprehension: especially seeing it was profitable to bring to light the grosse hypocrisie of Ananias. Therefore so often as we haue any dealings with the wicked, if we be desirous to handle a good cause well, we must beware that there breake out in vs no motion of anger, that no desire of reuenge prouoke vs to breake out into railing. But if the spirit of meeknes raignt in vs, we may handle the wicked according to their deserts, as it were out of the mouth of God: yet so that it may appeare that wee bee rather prophets, then that we blunder out any thing rashly through immoderate heat.

4 *Those which stood by said.* By this it appeareth that they were all sicke of one disease. For why do they not rather blame Ananias, when they saw that he had quite forgotte all modesty, & that he brake out into violence, and stripes after a barbarous manner; for euen this did turne to the reproch of them all. But this is a solemne thing among hypocrites, they looke narrowly into other mens fautes, and winke at their owne. Againe, this pride is coupled with tyranny, -so that their subiectes and those

those who are vnder them may doe nothing, but as for themselves they may do whatsoeuer they wil. So fareth it at this day in popery, the more liberty that impure cleargie doth graunt to it selfe, and the more carelesslie it waxeth wanton, and polluteth the whole world with the sinnes which flow thence, the more straitly doe they rule, and stay the tongues of the people. Therefore if any man dare be so bold as once to whisper a litle liberty doth cause them to make outrageous outcries as if it wer haynous sacriledge.

5 *I knew not brethren.* Those who thinke that this excuse of Paul hath in it no figure, doe not well marke the contrarie obiections wherewith their error is refuted. They say that Paul knew not the high priest, because he had bin absent long time. As if he were ignoraunt, that he was chiefe priest, who is the chiefe in the counsell, and hath the vppermost roome. Neither was Ananias so base and obscure, that Paul was ignorant of his degree. But his wordes cut off all occasion of disputation, when as he chideth him, because occupying the place of a iudge vnder colour of the lawe, he doth in his rage that which is contrary to law. Therefore Paul knew what place he had, whe he said that he abused his power. Other some inuent a more subtil answer, that he spake not here of the man, but of the office and publike person. But first the exposition is farre fet, because if Paul did reuerence the priesthood, he must needs haue giuen some honour to the man which had the same. And now it is not to be thought (forasmuch as the maiesty of the priesthood was abolished by the comming of Christ, & that there folowed such filthy profanatio,) that Paul did honor those as he was woont (as if their perfect & lawfull authority did continue) who vnder the title of the high priests did reign as Lords without any law or right. Therefore subscribing to Augustine, I doe not doubt but that this is a tainting excuse. Neither doth that any whit hinder because plain speech becōmeth the ministers of the word. For seeing there be 2. sorts of Ironiaes, one which is couered, with subtletie & meanes to deceiue, another which doth so figuratiuely note out the thing which is in hand, that it doth prick sorer: in this second there is nothing which doth not wel beseem the seruāts of Christ. Therefore this is the meaning of the words, Brethren, I acknowledge nothing in this man, which belōgeth to the priest. Also he addeth a testimony of the 22. chap. of Exod. in which place though Moses speak of iudges, yet the sentence is extended properly vnto any lawfull order. Therefore all dignity which is appointed for maintenance of ciuil gouernment, ought to be reuerenced & had in honor. For whosoever he be that rebelleth against or resisteth the magistrate & those who are appointed to rule, and are promoted vnto honor, he wold haue no gouernmēt. And such desire redeth to the disturbing of order. Yea it shaketh and ouerthroweth all humanity. Therefore Paul purgeth himself of this crime: yet so, that he denieth that Ananias is to be counted a priest of God, who hath corrupted & peruered al the order of the church. But here riseth a question, whether we ought not to obey a ruler, though he exercise tyrāny. For if that mā be not to be depriued of honor, which executeth his office amisse,
Paul

Exo. 22. 28.

Paul offended in robbing the high priest of his honor. Therefore I answer that there is some difference betweene ciuil magistrates, & the prelates of the church. For though the exployting of earthly or ciuil rule be confused or peruerse: yet the Lord wil haue men to continue stil in subiection. But when the spiritual gouernment doth degenerate, the consciences of the godly are at libertie, and set free from obeying vniust authoritie: especially if the wicked and prophane enemies of holines doe falsly pretend the title of priesthood to ouerthrow the doctrine of saluation, and challenge to themselves such authoritie, as that they will be thereby equal with God. So it is not only lawful for the faithfull at this daye to shake off from their shoulders the popes yoke, but they must do it of necessity: seeing they cannot obey his lawes, vnlesse they forsake God,

6 And when Paul knew that the one part were of the Sadduces, and the other of the Pharises, hee cryed out in the Councill, Men and brethren, I am a Pharise, the sonne of a Pharisee: I am iudged of the hope and resurrection of the dead.

7 And when he had thus saide, there was a dissention among the Pharises and Sadduces, and the multitude was denided,

8 For the Sadduces say there is no resurrection, neither Angel, neither Spirit: but the Pharisees confesse both.

9 And there was a great crie: and the Scribes of the Pharises selfe arose, and stroue saying, we finde no euill in this man, but if the Spirit or an Angell haue spoken to him, let vs not fight against God.

6 And when Paul knewe. The policie of Paule whereof Luke maketh mention, doeth seeme not to besee me the seruant of Christ. For the subtilty which he vled, was inwrapped in dissimulation, which was not farre from a lye. He saith that the state of his cause did consist in the resurrection of the dead. But wee knowe that the strife arose about other matters. Because hee disanulled the ceremonies, because hee admitted the Gentiles into the couenaunt of saluation. I aunsweare, that, though these thinges be true, yet did not he lye. For he doth neyther denie that hee was accused of other matters, neither doth this make the whole controuersie to consist in one point: but hee saith truely that the Sadduces were therefore offended with hym, because he did holde the resurrection of the dead. He knewe that those who had conspyred together agaynst him, were enemies also one to another. Hee knewe that his owne conscience was cleere: and it had beene an easie matter for him to prooue his cause good before iust iudges. Yet because he seeth them crie out on him clamorously, and that he had no place graunted to defend himselfe, he setteth his enemies together by the eares. Whereby it doeth also appeare, that they were carried away through ignorance and blinde zeale. Therefore we must note that Paul did so beginne, as that he was desirous truely and plainly to vnfold the whole matter: and that he did not craftily refuse to make a pure and sounde confession, such as the seruantes of Christ

Christ ought to make: but because the way was stopt before him, neither could he be heard, he vsed the last remedie, to declare that his aduersaries were carried headlong with blinde hatred. For the end doth shew, that those are not guided with reason or iudgement, who are carried out of the waie by mutuall discord. Now if any man which darkneth the light of doctrine, excuse his craft, by the example of Paul, he is easily refuted. For it is one thing for a man to prouide for him selfe alone with the losse of trueth: and another, to leade the professed enemies of Christ from resisting him, that they may strue among themselves.

Furthermore, we see the nature of the wicked, though they disagree among them selues like enemies, yet when they are to make warre against the Gospel, they forget their owne garboiles. For Satan the father of discorde, doth procure this one consent only among his, that they may bee of one minde and of one affection, to extinguish godlinesse. So we see that the factions which are in popery whor, are quiet only so long as they ioine hand in hand, to oppresse the Gospel. For which cause the disciples of Christ must be more couragious to foster & nourish trueth, that being ioyned together, they may the better resist. Also we gather by this what manner of peace the Scripture commendeth vnto vs. Christ saith that the peace makers are the childre of God, & this is true, that they must do what they can, to bring all me that they may grow together vnder the Lord. Yet this doth not hinder, but that we may (fighting vnder the banner of the same Lorde) as it were with the sound of the trumpet stirre vp the wicked, that they may like Madi-anites one slea another: so that both simplicitie of zeale, & the wisdom of the spirit direct vs hither.

Mat. 5.9.

Jud. 7. 22.

One part were Sadducees. We see here again as in a glasse, how deformed and confused the ruine of the Church was at that day. Faith is the soule of the Church: nothing is more proper to faith then agreement, nothing more contrary then sects. And this thing must needs followe, when euery man (setting aside the worde of God) did draw his disciples vnto his owne inuentions. For there is no other holy bond of vinity, then the naturall and plaine truth of God. So sone as men depart from that, no maruell if they bee despersed, and drawne hither and thither like members pulled a sunder.

Therefore the beginning of sects among the Iewes was the corruption of the law: like as the Lord did reuege the profanatio of his word, which was corrupt with diuers inuentions of men with like punishment in popery. Wherefore we must the more fear, least horrible, & more lamentable scatterings hang ouer our heads, then was that which was in time of popery: whereof there appeare some tokens. And no maruell seeing we prouoke the Lord to wrath so many wayes with our vnthankfulnesse. But though the face of the church be blotted and blurred with manie spotted and blottes: and what manner of deformitie soeuer fall out hereafter, let vs comfort our selues with this: that, as God was carefull then to deliuer the church wonderfully from destruction, so though his grace there shall alwayes some seede continue. It cannot bee indeed

in deede but that godly mindes will somewhat despaire, when they see things so farre out of order: but let vs learne streightway to holde vp that buckler, that the Lorde who in such a thick mist of errours, in such an heape of superstitions, in the vnbridled licentiousnes of sectes, did preserue his Church among the Iewes, will neuer suffer the same to bee quite put out wholly in the world. The same thing did likewise happen in poperie. For when as the worship of God was ouerthrowne there, the doctrin of saluation was oppressed, the kingdome of Christ was thrown downe, and vngodlinesse did openly reigne: yet God did saue certaine hidden remnants, and there was alwaies some wheat in the chaffe. It is very profitable to conserre these examples together. When as wee inueigh at this day against popery, the hyred patrons thereof crie out on the other side, that nothing is more absurd, thā that we should imagine that the Church of God was extinguished during many ages: as if wee did imagine that God had no people left, when those had forsaken him who ought to haue maintained his pure worships. Yea we complaine that those tyrants did corrupt the church, that the temple was by them profaned, so that it did not greatly differ from an hogstie, that the flock of Christ was scattered abroad, and his sheeple broken downe. Finally that the church was hidden from the eyes of men, yet so that the Lorde knew his elect, though they were dispearsed, and did browd them vnder his wings. And by this it appeareth how foolishly the Papists brag and boast of the titles of honour, in that not the cōmon sort, or any priuate men, but the priestes them selues did in times past diuide the Iewish church by deadly dissention.

Wherefore there is no cause why we should be afraid stoutly to resist the pride of the Pope and of all his adherents, with whom we haue the same cumbate, which the prophetes and apostles had with the priestes of their time. And as the reuerence of the church did not keep back holie men, but that they did molest the tyranny of the wicked priestes, so we must not be terrified with vaine visures, vnder which the Papists doe vainly boast: seeing they haue notwithstanding cast from them the doctrine of godlines. It is certaine, that the people were then diuided into three sects: but Luke doth only make mention of the pharisees and Sadduces, omitting the Essenes: because it was most fit for his purpose thus to do. And though this be the cōmon opinion concerning their names, that the former took their name of separating, because they withdrew themselves from the company of other men, by reason of their feigned holines: and that the second sort took their name of righteousness, as if they were called Zeduchim: notwithstanding for mine owne part as I haue said elswhere, I am rather of their mind, who say that the pharisees took their name of interpreting. For *Pharus* signifieth exposition: wherevpon also interpreters are called *pharuschim*: & we know that the pharisees being not content with the natural doctrine of the law & prophets, did put in many inuentiōs, which they said they receiued of the fathers.

8 *The Sadduces say.* Though Luke maketh mention of 3. points wherein these sects did dissent: yet shortly after he bringeth them to 2. because there

there is like respect to be had of spirits, & of Angels. Therefore he saith that the Pharisees did confesse both: to wit, that the dead shall rise againe, and that humane and angelicall spirites are immortall. And here Luke declareth in what sense the Apostle professed himselfe to bee a Pharisee: not because he did subscribe to all their inuentions, but only in the resurrection of the dead. We know howe sharply Christe reproveth their errors; therefore it had been good that some exception had byn added, least any man might thinke that Paul was one with them in all things. Now though the Saduces did denie the resurrection, yet may we not thinke that they were altogether like to the Epicures. For they did confesse that the world is gouerned by the prouidence of God, and that euery man is rewarded for his workes. In this point they wer sounder then the Epicures. But they did dote too grossly, when they included the rewards of righteousnesse, & the punishments of wickednes in this life. For that I may omit the scripture, experience doeth teach, that as well the godlie as the vngodly are either punished with many miseries, or els gently dealt withall: and that the wicked doe oftentimes liue in wealth and pleasures, when as the worshippers of God are oftentimes miserably tormented, as it is Psalm. 73. Therefore whosoever esteemeth the iudgement of God by the present estate of men, whether it be good or bad, hee must needs fall away from faith at length vnto Epicurish contempt of God.

Mat. 22. 29.

Psalm. 73. 4.

Now this is beastly blockishnesse to rest in an vncertain & transitory life, and not to be wise about the earth. For which cause we must flee from that error as from a detestable monster. For though godlines haue the promises of the earthly life also: yet because we be most miserable if our hope stay still in this worlde, the children of God must begin with this, that they may lift vp their eyes toward heauen, and think continually vpon the glory of the last resurrection.

Neither angell nor spirite. This place is expounded two manner of wayes. Many referre it vnto the holy Ghost: which seemeth to bee vnlkely. For howsoeuer the Saduces be to be holden excused in other errors: yet because the scripture doeth so often repeate the name of the Spirite, I will scarce beleue that they denyed that which the Pharisees beleueed onely lightly and obscurely. For euen these men had no distinct faith concerning the holy Spirite, that they did acknowledge the proper person of the Spirit in the substance of God. Some wil haue Angel and Spirite to signifie one thing, as if one thing were spoken twise. But to what ende was it to repeate a thing which was plaine enough? I warraunt you that member which followeth did deceiue them; where Luke seemeth to make no distinction. But we shewed the reason before: because seeing the soules of men and Angels are of one and the same nature and substance, they be both placed in one order. Therefore I do not doubt but that this is Luke his true meaning that the Saduces did denie Angels, and also all maner of Spirites.

Nowe for as much as Paul crieth that hee is a Pharisee in this point of doctrine, hee doeth flatly condemne all brainicke fellowes

Mm

who

who at this day are in the same error. For there be certaine profane & vnlearned men who dreame that Angelles and Diuels are nothing els but good and euil inspirations: and least they want som colour, they say that all that came from the Heathen, which the scripture hath concerning good and euill angels: whereas that opinion which was common in the world had his beginning from the heauenly doctrine. But the Heathen did with their lyes pollute that doctrine which they had from the fathers. As touching mens soules, because euen at this day, certain miscreants doe feigne that the soules do vanish away in death vntill the day of the resurrection, their madnesse is likewise refuted by the testimony of Luke.

9 *There was a great cry.* That sedition whereof Luke spake a little before, is more plainly expressed in this place: to wit, that they were not only of diuers opinions, but did strue clamorously with outcries. Wherefore *stasis* doth signifie somewhat more then dissent. Furthermore this place doth teach what mischief disagreements bring with them. For because they take their beginning for the moste part of ambition, men proceed thence vnto contention, and straightway stubbornnesse breaketh out. When they be come thither: because there is no place left either for iudgement or moderation, they can no longer iudge of the cause. Those who did detest Paul, begin at a sodaine to defend him. It was well done, if they had done it with iudgement. But because they inueigh against the Sadduces, they are so inflamed with hatred against them, that they be blind in Paul his matter. For which cause we must beware of heat of contention, which disturbeth all things.

11 *If the spirit.* This ought vndoubtedly to be expounded of the holie Ghost. And nothing could be spoken either more godly, or modestly. For so soone as it is apparant that any doctrine is revealed from heauen, those doe wickedly resist God, who doe not receiue the same. But how is it that the Scribes do so sodainly count Paul a prophete of God, whom they were once readie to haue murdered: whom they had condemned with their prejudice, vntill the contention arose? Furthermore as they did cut their owne throtes with these words as with a sword: so God would haue them to be to vs teachers to instruct vs that we despise not the oracles which come from heauen. Notwithstanding wee see againe, that those stande in doubt, who take not good heede and are not carefull to marke the woord of God: and that they wauer so often as anie thing is brought to light, because they be vnworthie to vnderstande the certaine truth. Wherefore if wee bee desirous to haue our studies gouerned by the spirit of discretion, let vs applie our selues to learne.

10 *And when there arose a sore dissention among them, the chiefe captaine feared lest Paul should haue bin pulled in peeces by them, and he commanded the souldiers to goe downe, and to take him from them, and to bring him into the campe.*

11 *And the night following the Lord stood by him and said, Be of good courage Paul.*

- Paul: for as thou hast borne witness of me at Ierusalem, so thou must bear witness of mee at Rome also.
- 12 And when it was day, certaine of the Iewes gathered themselves together, & bound themselves with a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink, vntill they had killed Paul.
- 13 And they were more then forsie men, whiche had made this conspiracie.
- 14 And they came to the chiefe Priestes and Elders, and saide, we have bound our selues with a curse that wee will taste nothing, vntill wee haue killed Paul.
- 15 Nowe therefore signifie yee to the chiefe captaine and counsell, that he bring him forth to you to morrow, as if yee would know somewhat more certainly of him. And we before he come neere, are readie to kil him.
- 16 But when Paul his sisters sonne heard of the laying in wait, he came and entered into the campe, and told Paul.

10 Wee see againe what a cruell mischiefe contention is, which so soone as it doeth once waxe whot, hath suche violent motions, that euen most wise men are not well in their wittes. Therefore so soone as a nic beginning shall shew it selfe, let vs studie to preuent it in time, least the remedie be too late in brideling it when it is in the middle: because no fire is so swift as it. As for the chiefe captaine, as hee was appointed to bee the minister of Gods prouidence to saue Paules life: so hee deliuereth him now the second time by his souldiars from death. For thogh the chief captaine defend him so diligently for no other purpose, saue only that he may preuent vprores and murder: yet the Lorde who from heauen prouided and appointed helpe for his seruauant, doeth direct his blind hands thither.

11 And the night following, Luke declareth that Paul was strengthened with an oracle, that he might stand couragiously against terrible assaultes, when things were so far out of order. Surely it could not be but that he was fore afraid, and that hee was fore troubled with the remembrance of things to come. Wherefore the oracle was not superfluous. Those former things, whereby he was taught that God cared for him, ought to haue sufficed to nourish his hope, and to haue kept hym from fainting: but because in great dangers, Satan doth oftentimes procure new feares, that he may thereby (if he cannot altogether ouerwhelme Gods promises in the hearts of the godly) at least darken the same with cloudes: it is needfull that the remembrance of them bee renewed, that faith beeing holpen with new proppes and stayes, may stand more steadfastly. But the summe is, that Paul may behaue him selfe boldly, because hee must bee Christe his witness at Rome also. But this seemeth to bee but a colde and vaine consolation: as if he shoulde say: Feare not, because thou must abide a sorer brunt: for it had bene better accordyng to the fleshe, once to die and with speede to ende his dayes, then to pine away in bandes and long time to lie in prison.

The Lord doth not promise to deliuer him, no he saith not so muche as that he shall haue a ioyfull end: only he saith that those troubles and afflictions wherewith hee was too fore oppressed already, shall continue long. But by this we gather better of what great importance this confidence is, that the Lord hath respect vnto vs in our miseries, though hee stretch not forth his hand by and by to helpe vs. Therefore let vs learn euen in most extreeme afflictions to stay our selues vpon the word of God alone: and let vs neuer faint so long as hee quickeneth vs with the testimonie of his fatherly loue. And because Oracles are not now sent from heauen, neither doeth the Lord himselfe appeare by visions, wee must meditate vpon his innumerable promises, whereby he doth testifie that he will be nigh vnto vs continually. If it be expedient that an angel come downe vnto vs, the Lord will not denie euen this kinde of confirmation. Neuertheless we must giue this honour to the word, that being content with it alone, wee wait patiently for that helpe which it promiseth vs.

Moreouer, it did profite some nothing to heare Angells which were sent downe from heauen: but the Lord doth not in vaine seale vp in the hearts of the faithfull by his Spirit those promises which are made by him. And as he doth not in vaine beate them in and often repeat them, so let our faith exercise it selfe diligently in the continuall remembrance of them. For if it were necessarie that Pauls faith should bee oftentimes set and shored vp with a new help: there is none of vs, which needeth not many moe helps. Also our minds must be armed with patience, that they may passe through the long and troublefome circuits of troubles and afflictions.

12 *And when it was day.* By this circumstance Luke sheweth how necessary it was for Paul to gather new and fresh strength of faith, that he might not quake in most great and sodaine danger. For being told of this so desperate madnesse of his enemies, he could not otherwise thinke but that he should loose his life. This vow whereof Luke speaketh, was a kinde of curse. The cause of the vow was, that it might not be lawfull for them to change their purpose, nor to cal back that which they had promised. There is alwaies in deed in an oath a secret curse, if any man deceiue or forswear: but sometimes to the end men may the more bind themselves, they vse certaine formes of cursing: and they make themselves subiect to cruell torments, to the ende they may be the more afraid. This historie doeth teache that zeale is so bloody in hypocrites, that they weigh not what is lawfull for them: but they runne carelesly whither soeuer their lust doth carry them. Admit we graunt that Paul was a wicked man, and worthie to die: yet who had giuen priuate men leaue to put him to death? Now if any man had asked why they did so hate Paul, they would quickly haue answered, because he was a reuolt & schismaticke, but it was but a foolish opinion, and an opinion conceiued of an vncertaine report concerning this matter, which had rashly possessed their minds.

The same blindness and blockishnes doth at this day prick forward the

the Papists, so that they thinke nothing vnlawfull for them in destroy-
ing vs. Hypocrisie doth so blinde their eyes, that as men freed from the
lawes of God and men, they are carried by their zeale sometimes vnto
trecherie, sometimes vnto guile, sometime vnto intollerable crueltie: &
finally, to attempt whatsoever they will. Moreover we see in this histo-
rie how great the rashnesse of the wicked is. They bind themselues with
a curse, that they will eat no meat till they haue slaine Paul: as if his life
were in their hands. Therefore these brainsick men take to them selues
that which the Lord doth so often in Scripture say is his, to wit, to haue
the life and death of those men whom hee hath created in his hande. Deut. 32. 39
Moreover there bee not onely two or three who are partners in this
madnesse, but more then fortie. Whence wee doe also gather how wil-
ling and bent men are to doe mischief seeing they runne together thus
on heapes.

Furthermore, seeing Satan doeth driue them headlong into their
own destruction: how shamefull is then our sluggishnesse, when as wee
scarce moue one finger in maintaining the glory of God? Wee must
vse moderation, that wee attempt nothing without the commaunde-
ment of God: but when God calleth vs expressly, our loitring is without
excuse.

14 *They came to the chiefe priestes.* Seeing that the priests agree to
such a wicked and vngodly conspiracie, by this they proue that there
was in them neither any feare of God, neither yet any humanitie. They
doe not only allowe that which is brought before them concerning the
murdering of the man by laying awaite: but also they are readie to be
partners in the murder, that they may deliuer him into the handes of
the murtherers; whom they woulde haue made away some way, they
passe not howe. For what other thing was it to take a man out of the
handes of the iudge and to stea him, then like murtherers to rage euē
in the very place of iudgment? The priests surely would neuer haue al-
lowed suche a wicked purpose if there had been in them any droppe of
godly and right affectio, or of humane feeling. Moreover they did what
they could to bring destruction vpon all the people and themselues al-
so. But the Lord did by this means disclose their wicked impietie, which
lay hid vnder a colour of honour.

16 *Paul his sisters sonne.* Wee see in this place how the Lord doth
crosse the purposes of the vngodlye. Hee permitteth them to attempt
many things, and he suffereth their wicked indeuours, but at length
hee sheweth euē in the twinkling of an eye that hee doth from hea-
uen deride whatsoever men go about vpon earth. There is no wisdom,
sayeth Salomon, there is no counsell against the Lorde. Whereto, that
of Isaias doth aunswere, Take counsel together, and it shall come to
nought: speak the worde and it shall not stande. This is set before our
eyes to be considered, in this present historie, as in a glasse. The matter
was almost dispatched, that Paul shoulde come out on the morrowe to
be slaine, as a vowed sacrifice. But the Lord doth shewe that his life is

Pro. 21. 30.
Esa. 8. 10.

most safely kept, so that whatsoeuer men goe about: all is in vaine. As for vs, let vs not feare, but that his prouidence whereof he shewed some token then, reacheth euen vnto the defending of vs, because this promise continueth sure; There shall not an hayre fall from your heads, &c.

Luk. 21. 18. Moreouer it is woorth the noting that hee woorketh sometimes by meanes vnlooked for, to saue those that be his, that hee may the better exercise our faith: who would haue thought that a boy would haue disclosed their laying await, which those who were partners in the conspiracie thought was knowen to none but to themselues? Therefore let vs learn to leane vnto and stay our selues vpon the Lord, though we see no ordinary way to saue our selues, who shal find a way euen through places where nothing can passe.

- 17 And when Paul had called vnto him one of the Centurions, he saith, Bring this young man vnto the chiefe captaine: for he hath a certaine thing to shewe him.
- 18 And he tooke him and led him vnto the chiefe captaine, and said, Paul the prisoner called me vnto him, and desired me to bring this young man vnto thee who hath somewhat to say to thee.
- 19 And the chiefe captaine tooke him by the hand, and went aside with him, and asked him, what is it that thou hast to say to me?
- 20 And he said, the Iewes haue cōspired together to desire thee, that thou bringst forth Paul into the counsell to morrow, as if they would know somewhat more certainly of him.
- 21 But doe not thou obey them: for more then forty of them lay in wait for him who haue bound themselves with a curse, that they will neither eate nor drink vntill they haue slaine him. And now they be readie waiting that thou shouldst promise.
- 22 Therefore the chiefe captaine let the young man goe, and commanded him, tell no man that thou hast tolde me these things.
- 23 And when he had called vnto him two vnder captaines, he said, make readie two hundred souldiars that they may goe to Cesarea, and horse men seuentie, and two hundredeth, with darters at the thirde houre of the night.
- 24 And make readie beasts that they may set Paul thereon, and bring him safe to Falix the gouernour.

“Or Iauelings.

17 Calling vnto him. Paul was not so desirous of life, but he would haue made hast to die, if the Lord had thought it good so to bee: but because he knoweth that he serueth Christ vpon that condition, that he may no lesse liue then die to him, he doth not neglect to auoid the danger which was reuealed to him. And though he be fully perswaded that God is the keeper of his life: yet hee doeth not wait vntill God put forth his hand out of heauen to worke a myracle, but doth rather vse the remedy which is offered him: nothing douting but that it is appointed by God.

Thus must all the ministers of Christ deale, that being furnished with inuincible

invincible constancie, so farre as their calling requireth, they feare not danger, and yet that they cast not away themselves through rashnesse. Let them call vpon the name of the Lorde, cheerefully euen amidst the pikes: and yet let them not contemne those helpes which are offered. Otherwise they shall be iniurious to God, in that they are not only not moued with his promises, but also despise the means which he hath appointed for their deliuerance.

19 *Taking him by the hand.* In that the chiefe captaine did shewe himselfe so courteous to the young man, in that he lead him by the hand into a secret place, in that he vouchsafed to heare him so gently, all this must be attributed to the grace of God, who promised to giue his people fauour in the sight of the Egyptians, who vseth to mollifie haide hearts, to tame fierce spirites, and to fashion those vnto al humanitie, whom he hath determined to vse as meanes to helpe those that be his. A man trained vp in the warres might no lesse haue giuen this young man the repulse, whom he knew not, then haue despised Paul his tute. Therefore the Lord who hath in his hand the hearts of men, did frame the profane man to giue care vnto him. Also it was well that he knewe before how furiously they raged against Paul, that hee might the more willingly succour a miserable and forsaken man. Those who are in authoritie are taught by this example what a great vertue curesie is. If he had bin an hard matter to come to him, he might through ignorance haue deliuered Paul to the Iewes to bee put to death. So often times Magistrates doe fall into many and great offences through their owne pride, because they will not admit those who would giue them good counsell.

Calling vnto him. And here we see the prouidence of God yet more manifestly. For though this bee the drift of the chiefe captaine, to preuent a publike vpror, whereof he should haue giuen an account before the Gouvernour: yet hee executeth the counsell of God in deliuering Paul. For he was to gather souldiars together: also the citie must needs be stripped of the garrison, and the voyage required some cost. Therefore we must to consider the wisdom of the chiefe captaine, that our faith lift vp her eyes into heauen, and vnderstand that God doth guide the heart of a profane man by a secret instinct, and that hee is at length a guide to Paul and the souldiars, that hee may come safe to Cesarea. The third houre of the night was the end of the first watch. Therefore it is all one as if the chiefe captaine did commaunde that the souldiars be in readinesse at the second watch. Luke calleth those who carried artes *Lancearios*, who being more lightly weaponed, were placed in the wings, when as the souldiars which pertained vnto the legions were more fit for set warre.

Exod. 3.21.

And he wrote a letter after this sort, *Gladius Iuliano the most mightie Ruler Felix sendeth greeting*

27 This man beeing taken of the Iewes, and almost killed of them, did I rescue comming vppon them with souldiars, after that I knewe that hee was a Romane.

28 And beeing desirous to knowe the cause for which they did accuse him, I brought him into their councill.

29 Whom, I perceined they accused of questions of their lawe, hauing in him no crime, worthie of death or of bonds.

30 And when I was certified of the laying awaite of the Iewes, I sent him streight way vnto thee, and gaue commandement to his accusers, that they shoulde tell those things before thee which they haue against him. Fare well.

31 And the souldiers as they were commanded, tooke Paul and brought him by night vnto Antipatras.

32 And on the morrow when they had sent away the horsemen that they might goe with him, they returned to the campe.

33 When they were come to Cesarea, and had deliuered the epistle to the gouernour, they presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the gouernour had read it, and had asked of what province he was, and had knowen that he was of Celicia,

35 I will heare thee, saith he, when thine accusers are come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herods iudgement hall.

25 And he wrote a letter. First, we must briefly admonish the Readers, who haue not bin conuerfant in histories, that this Fœlix was brother to Pallas, who being Cæsars freemā, became equal with the chief of the citie in welth and power. Yea moreouer the Senate gaue him the ornaments of the Pretor nor without titles of filthie and shamefull flattery. Therfore seeing the seruants of Claudius abusing his folly did rule the Romane Empire at their pleasure, and chiefly Narcissus and Pallas, no maruel if this latter did appoint his brother to be gouernour of Iudea. The summe of the Epistle tendeth to this end, that the chiefe captaine may helpe Paul with his preiudice: and may admonishe Fœlix of the injuries of his aduersaries, and may so discredite them that they may not be able to do him any hurt.

27 This man being taken. This was spoken odiously concerning the Iewes that he might purchase more fauour for Paul, that a man being a Romane was by them sore beaten and almost slaine: also hee commendeth him for the right and priuiledge of his freedome, that he may bee the more courteously handled. Furthermore this commendation was not purchased by prayer or flatterie, neither was it bought with money. How came it to passe then that the chiefe captaine did shew himselfe so courteous freely to an obscure man & whom al men did hate, saue only because the Lord had appointed him to be his seruants patron? Therefore we see how he gouerneth the tongues and hands of the infidels to the profit of those that be his.

29 Whom I perceined. In this place hee acquitteth Paul, so farre as his iudgement could reach. But let vs note that a profane mā speaketh. For amog the people of god, it is an offence worthy of no lesse punishment,

to corrupt the doctrine of godlinesse with wicked and false opinions, than to doe iniurie too, or commit wickednesse among men. The Romans would not haue suffered their superstitions or feined worshipings of their gods to be freedom: but forasmuch as they made no account of the Law of God, yea seing they were desirous to haue the same quite put out, it was among them no fault to belceue Moses and the Prophets no more, or to trouble the Church with false opinions. Therefore there was a Law that the gouernours shoulde not meddle with such matters: but that those who were abiding in the prouinces shoulde so retaine their religion, that if any thing were done contrary to the same, the Roman Magistrates should not meddle with the punishing thereof. This is the reason why the chief captain thinketh it no offense, to haue moued questions concerning the law. And vnder colour hereof vnlearned men will haue leaue granted to themselves and others amisse to cause trouble. The Lord saith farre otherwise, who doth more sharply punish, the violating of his worship, than any iniuries done to men. And surely nothing is more absurd than to let those who rob God of his honour scape scottfree, seing theist is punished. But as the chiefe captaine careth not for the Iewish religion: so the false accusations and slanders of the Jews are refuted, wherewith they would gladly haue burdened Paul.

40 *When it was shewed to me.* The seconde part of the Epistle where the chiefe captaine doth bring the aduersaries into contempt, because they went about to kill Paul treacherously. Whence it is also gathered, that they trouble Paul vniustly, and that they sought so sore after his life without any cause. For if they had persecuted him lawfully, they would haue trusted to the goodnes of their cause, and not haue suffered him to be iudged according to Law. Now when as they seeke to kil him, it appeareth that they haue no reason.

32. *And the next day.* Though Luke did not expresse before that the soldiers were commaunded to returne before they came at their wayes end, yet it is certaine, that they were appointed to accompany him onely vnto that place, where the chiefe Captaine thought Paul would bee safe: for he went out priuily in the night. And the Chiefe Captaine knew that so soone as they had finished some part of their iorney, there was no farther danger: because the aduersaries could haue no hope to ouertake him: and that it was no point of wisdome to send part of the garrison farre away.

CHAP. XXIII.

1 **A**ND after five dayes the chiefe Priest Ananias came downe with the Elders and one Tertullus a Rhetorician, who came before the Governour against Paul.

2 And when Paul was called forth Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seing that we liue in great peace by meanes of thee, and seing many things are restored in this nation by thy prouidence:

3 Thus allow we euer and in all places most noble Felix, with all thanks.

- 4 But least I become tedious vnto thee, I pray thee heare vs a little of thy confession.
 5 For we haue found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mouer of debate vnto all the Iewes throughout the whole world, and an author of the sect of the Nazarenes.
 6 Who did also goe about to pollute the Temple: whom when we had taken, wee would haue iudged him according to our Law.
 7 But the chiefe Capitaine Lyfias came vpon vs, and with great violence tooke him from vs.
 8 Commanding his accusers to come downe vnto thee, of whom thou maiest, if thou wilt enquire, know the certaintie of all these thinges, whereof wee accuse him.

9 And the Iewes added, saying, that these things were so.

10 Seing Ananias goeth downe to Cesarea to accuse Paul, it maketh the coniecture more probable, which I brought before touching his Priesthood. For it was not meet for the highest Priest to take such a journey: Therefore some other man was highest Priest at that time: and Ananias being one of the chiefe Priests, forasmuch as he was in great authoritie and was with all a stout man, did take this ambassage vpon him. He bringeth with him a traine and that of the worshipfull companie of Elders, that the Gouvernour might be moued with their verie pompe to condemne Paul. But forasmuch as Paul did vse no eloquence, they had no neede to hire a Rhetorician, to contend with him in eloquence. Moreouer they did excede both in dignitie and also in multitude, so that it was an easie matter for them to oppresse a poore man, and such a one as was destitute of mans helpe. Therefore it was a signe of an euill conscience, in that seing they were men of great experience, exercised in publike affaires, and skilfull in matters pertaining to courts, they hyre a Rhetorician. Eloquence is I confesse, the gift of God: but in this matter they went about nothing else, but to deceiue the iudge therewith. And Luke declareth this therefore, that wee may know that the Iewes did omit nothing, whereby they might oppresse Paule: and that they might not onely prooue him guiltie, but so dash him out of countenance, that he might not be able to defend himselfe: and so let vs consider that it came to passe by the wonderfull prouidence of God, that Paul did so stoutly endure such sore assaults. Wherefore if it so fall out at any time that a godly man being alone be beset with a great number of enemies, let him call to minde this historie, and let him bee of good courage. As Dauid doeth likewise exhort vs by his owne example, If tentes were pitched about mee, I will not feare, because thou art with me.

Psal. 27.3.

2 Seeing wee liue in great peace. Tertullus vseth a preface nothing appertinent to the matter, because hee commendeth Felix his wisdom and vertues, that he may purchase fauour. Therefore it is a flitthie and flattering Exordium not that I am of their minde who reprehende Tertullus for speaking the iudge faue, and for seeking to winne his fauour.

hour. For it is not alwayes disagreeing with the right and lawfull forme of pleading, to commend the iudge: and there may reasons be brought on both sides (as they say) touching this matter. But I mislike nothing but this which is altogether corrupt. For the Rhetorician doth insinuate himselfe vnder false praises, that hee may darken the matter which is called in question. For to what ende doeth he speake of peace and a wel ordered state, saue onely that Felix may think that the iudic of Iudea consisteth in condemning Paul, and that he may examine the matter no further? Moreouer it appeareth by Iosephus how couetously, cruelly, and voluptuously Felix behaued himselfe in that prouince. The vnworthy and tragicall murtheting of the highest Priest Ionathas, because he set himselfe against his dissolute tyranny, was already past; and finally almost at the very same time Claudius Cæsar was enforced with the complaints of the whole nation, to put Festus in his place, and to call him to answer for himselfe.

Therefore we see how shamefullie this oratour did lie. And seeing all Pauls aduersaries sing the same song, we see that they bee blinded with hatred and malice, and that they treacherously betray the state of their countie: neither doe they passe what befall them so Paule may die the death. Where Erasmus translateth it, Many things are well done, the olde interpreter seemeth to come nearer vnto Paule his meaning, who saith, that *catores bonas* are wrought, which signifieth as much as reformation or dressings. Therefore Tertullus commendeth the industry of Felix, because he had cleansed Iudea from many corruptions, and he restored many things, which would otherwise haue decayed. To wit, to the ende he may the more greedily seeke to purchase the fauour of the nation (which he knew was otherwise offended with him) by the death of one man.

For wee founde this manner. Tertullus dooth aime at a double marke. The first is this, that Paul may be deliuered to the Iewes, because they be very skilfull in matters which concern the worship of God and the Lawe of Moses. But and if hee denie this, hee layeth to his charge a crime worthie of death, because hee procured contention among the people. They knewe that the Romanes did hate nothing more: therefore they vrge that the worst against Paule. This doeth Tertullus amplify when hee saith, that Paul had moued the Iewes throughout the whole worlde. But I wonder why hee addeth that he is the authour or chiefe of the sect of the Nazarites: which we know was rather a praise than a dispraise among the Iewes. I thinke that they meane not those who according to the olde and lawfull custome of the Lawe did consecrate themselves to God: but those troublesome murtherers, who did also vaunt and boast that they were zealous men. Some thinke that Nazarites are heere put for Christians: which may verie well bee. But if wee like this former exposition better, hee doeth craftilie laye to Paule his charge that hee was one of that sect which the Romanes did hate. For where as these zealous men would aboute all other haue beene counted for notable obseruers of the Lawe, they

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aduanced a colour of zeale as a banner to stir vp the minds of the common people. Neuerthelesse, these good men, who are so zealous ouer their libertie, doe not spare the chiefest maintainers thereof, so they may cause Paul to be hated by meanes of them. They would haue commended the Nazarites as couragious defenders of the Lawe, if it had not bin in this matter, but now, as if they did infect the whole world, they seeke to bring vpon Paul great reproch by saying that he is one of them. Moreouer they slander Paul impudently, for no man did thinke that he was guiltie of that crime. Therefore they lay to his charge no lesse wickedly than maliciously a crime which they take vp at their foore and inuент without all colour. But such is the carelesse security of hypocrits, that they thinke they may do whatsoeuer they will, so they colour their doings with zeale.

6 *Who went about to pollute the Temple.* It was a light and almost a frivolous accusation to lay this to his charge before the Romane Gouerriour, who could haue wished that the Temple had bin turned to siturue. But because nothing was more fit for procuring vprores than the polluting of the Temple, he doth craftily accuse Paul thereof: as if hee should say, that it was no thanks to him that Ierusalem was not on an vprore: and that hee carried such a firebrande as might haue procured sore hurt, if hee had not bene preuented. Also he includeth that other thing, that because Paul had offended in matters of religion, it did belong properly to the Iewes, to giue iudgement in that matter. And here hee complaineth also of the chiefe captaine *Lysias*, because hee robbed them of their right. Therefore his drift is to obtaine at the hands of the Ruler that he will restore to them that which *Lysias* had taken from the. This is also not voide of subtilty, in that *Tertullus* doeth discredit the chiefe captaine, because hee dealt more courteously toward Paul than the Priests would he should, and glauncingly hee bringeth him in suspicion, because hee dare not openly accuse him. But the question is whether they could hope that the Gouerriour would graunt them so much, seeing the Romane magistrates alone were to sit vpon life and death: I answer that hee maketh in this place some semblance of equitie, as if they were purposed to handle him more gentlie than hee deserved. For though they might not condemne any man to death, yet they might vse some light chastisement as was scourging. Neuerthelesse *Tertullus* doth not cease to desire before the president to haue him put to death.

8 *Having made inquirie.* A good request, that the Gouerriour doe not giue sentence before hee thoroughly examine and know the matter: and that he do not condemne Paul before he be lawfully conuict. But how dare they put in these conditions, seeing their owne consciences doe accuse them of vniust dealing? I answer that they had witnesses in rediness: and that they do not offer themselves to proue the matter vnill they do cal thes though there were another end. For they did hope that *Felix* would be so perswaded with such glorious words, that hee would turne ouer vnto them the man whom they did accuse, for a condemned man, whom they might handle at their pleasure. In summe, the more

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fiere they be vppon him, and the more they were puffed vp with some affiance they had in themselves, they thinke they shall get the vpper hand by this meanes: because the partie arreigned shal haue no licence granted to defend himselfe. Thus doe false accusars boldly boast, that their matter is plaine that they may blind the eyes of the iudges.

10 And Paul answered, after that the Gouvernour had beckened to him that he should speake, with a better mind do I speake for my selfe, forasmuch as I know that thou hast iudged this nation this manie yeeres:

11 Seeing that thou maist know that there are yet but twelue dayes since that I came vp to Ierusalem to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the Temple disputing with any man, or casting any contumacie of people, neither in the Synagogues, neither in the Citie:

13 Neither can they proue those things whereof they accuse me.

14 But this I confesse to thee; that according to the way which they call heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers, beleeuing all thinges which are written in the Law and the Prophetis:

15 And haue hope toward God, that the same resurrection of the deade which they wait for, shal be both of the iust and vniust.

16 And herein I studie alwayes to haue a cleare conscience towarde God and toward men.

17 And after many yeeres I came and brought almes to my nation, and offerings.

18 Wherein they founde mee purified in the Temple, neither with multitude, neither with vniquities.

19. 20 And certaine Iewes out of Asie, who ought to haue bin present her e, and to accuse, if they had any thing against me,

21 Or else let these same here say if they haue found any iniquitie in me, when I stood in the Councell: Or seeing I stande.

22 Except it be for this one voyce that I cried standing among them, I am iudged of you this day of the resurrection of the dead.

10 And Paul. The state of Paul his defense is not conuersant in the qualitic: but he denieth the crime that was laide to his charge, not that hee was ashamed of the Gospell, or affraied of the Crosse: but because that was no place to make any full confession of faith in. Therefore omitting the cause of the Gospell, which his accuser had not touchied, he answereth simple vnto the crimes whereof he was accused. But before he come thither, he saith that he doth the more willingly answer for himselfe before Felix, because he had long time beene gouernour of Iudea: because peraduenture some new gouernour would haue bin fore moued hearing such things laide to his charge. He doth not comend the vertues of the gouernour, but he saith that he is glad, because hee is of great expience, that he may iudge more iustly. This is surely a synccere and free manner of defending, to set matter against wordes. Yet Paule seemeth to gather amisse, that Felix can know the time of his comming, because he had bene gouernour many yeeres. I answer that this is said therefore, because it is likely that he wil deale more moderately: as if he should

should say, Because thou hast bin acquainted with their conditions long time, I haue the better hope that they shall not deceiue thee. For want of skill doth make iudges too credulous, and doth inforce them to make too much haste.

11 *To worship.* First it is certaine that he came for other causes, and he will afterward confesse that this was the chiefe, that he might bring almes for the sustentation of the brethren. But we may well excuse him, because it was not of necessitie that hee shoulde giue an account of his comming, onely he meant by the way to excuse himselfe of corrupt religion. Wherefore though he came to Ierusalem for some other cause, yet this is alwayes true, that he came with no other minde, but to profess himselfe to be a worshipper of God, and to approue the holinesse of the Temple by his worshipping. The other question is more harde, how he saith that he came to worship, seing the religion of the temple was alreadye abolished, and all difference of the temple taken away. I answer in this place likewise, that though he do not make his purpose knowne, yet he doth not lie or dissemble. For the faithfull seruants of Christ were not forbidden to worshippe in the Temple, so they did not tie holinesse to the place: but did lift vp pure handes freely without making choice of places. It was lawfull for Paul to enter into the temple after he was come to Ierusalem, that hee might make his godlinesse knowne, and there to vse the solempne rites of the worshipping of God, because he was void of superstition: so hee did not offer any propitiatorie sacrifices which were contrarie to the Gospel. Therefore religion did not compell him to come to Ierusalem according to the appointment of the law, as if the sanctuarie were the face of God as in times past; yet hee doth not abhorre the external worshipping which was vnto men a testimonie of godlinesse.

I. Tim. 2. 8.

12 *Disputing with any man.* Paule had no neede to denie any of these things if he had done them: because hee might haue answered for himselfe that it was wel done. He had bin one of the Scribes which disputed daily: neither were they forbidden either by the Law or by custome, but that they might assemble themselues together to bee taught. Yea to this end there were in diuerse places of the Cittie Synagogues, wherein they met together. Moreouer hee knewe that both Christ and also his Apostles had done the same thing. Also he might easily haue turned backe vppon his aduersaries the crime which they did obiect to him, who did dayly vse the very same things. But because he aimeth at no other thing at this present, but to refute the false accusations of his aduersaries, and to proue that importunate men had vnaduisedly molested him for no cause: hee intreateth not of the lawfulnessse of the fact (as they say) but onely of the fact. And hee standeth chiefly vppon this point to refute that slander, because hee was burdened to bee a raiser of tumultes. Therefore hee concludeth that hee was falsely and vniustly accused: because the aduersaries had neuer prooued those things which they had alleaged. This ought to haue beene sufficient to discharge him, seing hee was thus burdened with wicked lies, whereas there rested

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in him not the verie least suspicion that could be deuised.

14 *But I confesse.* Because they had laide to Paul his charge impietie and the polluting of the Temple, hee purgeth himselfe of both nowe, that Felix may vnderstand that his aduersaries were moued with euill will. For though the religion which is pretended bee false and preposterous, yet the studie thereof did oftentimes finde fauour with men, who tooke no great heede. Wherefore it was to bee feared least Felix, if he had conceived any sinister suspicion of Paul, should not onely haue pardoned the zeale of the Priests, but also haue graunted their requestes. Wherefore Paule doeth also refute this point of the accusation: and that so, that hee doeth not touch the faith of the Gospel: because (as wee haue saide) that was no fit place for making confession thereof. But what is this, that hee saith that hee worshippeth God according to the way which they call heresie? Some thinke that this is added like to a confession: because the enemies take that in euill part which ought to bee attributed to iudgement and right Election: as if Paule had saide; that that forme of religion which hee had followed is in deede called heresie, but vnworthelie. But seeing that name was not infamous either among the Iewes or Gentiles, it is vnlikely that hee maketh answer before a prophane man touching that which they counted euery where rather a comendation than any vice. When Christians haue conference together, the Spirit of God commaundeth that heretikes bee counted detestable: and hee teacheth vs to beware of heresies, because they bring vpon the Church plague, dissention and waistnesse. Therefore it is a thing not to be suffered among the people of God, whose safetie consisteth in the vnitie of faith. But because the Iewes did then openly boast of their sectes, that excuse whereof wee spake of late was superfluous. Therefore it remaineth that hee doe either meane that he is a Pharisee, or that hee call the Iewish religion or the profession of the Gospel (without infamie) heresie: because they were distinguished from the vse and custome of all nations. Seeing hee did before confesse himselfe to bee a Pharisee, there shall no inconuenience ensue, if wee say that hee doeth repeate the same nowe: especially seeing hee speaketh shortly after of the resurrection of the dead. But because this first point doeth onely containe a confession concerning the worshippe of the God of the fathers, I thinke that hee doeth rather speake generally of the Iewish religion, or of the Christian faith which did flowe thence. Paul was a Citizen of Rome, notwithstanding as he came of the Iewes by his auncestrie, hee confesseth that hee continueth in the religion which hee had learned of the fathers. And to this ende doeth the aduerbe of likenesse tende: for it sheweth a knowne thing, namely, the manner of worshippe whereunto the Iewes were addicted. Hee maketh expresse mention of the God of his fathers, because it was not lawfull for a man that was a Romaine to receiue the doctrine of the Lawe vnlesse hee had come of the Iewes. Also hee toucheth his aduersaries, which handle him so cruellie: whereas not

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withstanding they both worship one God. I (saith he) worship the same God (according to the manner deliuered by mine ancestours) which they themselues worship, and euen as they worship him. Neither doth that hinder because he was fallen from the ceremonies of the Law, and was content with the spirituall worship of God. For Paul thinketh it sufficient for him to wipe away that blotte of impiete which his aduersaries had falsely cast vpon him. Therefore the Papiſtes are ridiculous, who feigne that Paul alloweth all manner antiquitie. Wee say they worship the God of our fathers with Paule, as the custome was deliuered to vs from hand to hande: as if (euen they themselues being iudges) it were sufficient for the Iewes or Turks to hold vp the same buckler against the faith of Christ. But the apostle meant nothing lesse thā simply to ground religion in the authoritie of ancestours, and to defend his godlines with that defense, which might haue bin common to all the superstitions of the Gentiles: hee meant onely to stoppe the mouth of his aduersaries. Neuerthelesse he taketh this for a plaine matter, that the Fathers from whom the Iewish religion came, were good and sincere worshippers of God: so that the Iewes which wer not degenerate might well boast, that the God of their fathers whom they worshipped, was the onely creatour of heauen and earth: & that the country gods of al the rest of the world, were meere and vaine inuentions.

Beleeuing all things. A short exposition of the sentence next going before. For because he had not sinplie affirmed that he worshipped God; but did adde this word *omnis* or so: he doth now set downe how hee worshippeth God. Whereby it appeareth what great heede he taketh for feare he intangle himselfe in those accidentall superstitions, which reigned among the Iewes. As if any of vs do at this day answer the papiſts that he worshippeth the God-whom they professe, as we be taught out of the Law & out of the Gospel. By this let vs learn that God is not rightly worshipped so that our obedience can please him, vnlesse it be of faith, which is the onely ground-woke of godlinesse. For he (to the end hee may proue himselfe to bee the seruant of God) doeth not thrust vpon them bare ceremonies: but he saith flatly, that He beleeueth. Furthermore this place containeth a profitable doctrine, that this is the onely foundation of right and true faith, for a man to submit himselfe to the Scripture, and reuerently to embrace the doctrine thereof. Furthermore Paul doth in this place diuide the scripture into the Law and the Prophets, that he may the more plainly proue that he doth not dissent from the vniuerſall consent of the Church.

15. *Hoping in God.* Wee must note the course of his speech. For after that he hath professed that he beleeueth the scripture, hee doeth nowe adde the hope of the resurrection to come, that it may appeare that it commeth not from the vnderstanding of the flesh, or from the decrees of men, but it is conceiued out of the worde of God. Thus doeth the reuerence of the Scripture goe before, that it may hold vs fast bound, and it is the beginning of faith. After that the knowledge of those thinges which God hath reuealed there, doth follow, being coupled and linked with

with sure hope. And whereas he maketh them his fellowes, it is referred vnto the sounder sort. Though it be not to be doubted, but that he seeketh by this meanes and pollicie to bring them out of their lurking places into the cleare light and that before Felix: as it shal againe appeare by the conclusion of the defense. But in this place the generall resurrection is defended against certain brainesicke fellowes, who restrain the same vnto the members of Christ. But as Paul doth in this place say that al men shal rise againe, so by the plain voyce of Christ al are raised, some vnto iudgement, some vnto life. Iohn. 5. 29.

16 *And herein doe I studie.* There is no sharper prick to prick men forward with all desire to lead a godly & holy life, then the hope of the last resurrection, as the scripture teacheth in many places. Therefore when Paul wil effectually exhort the faithful any where, he calleth them back to remembre the same. Wherefore it is not without cause that he saith in this place, that staying himselfe vpon this faith hee hath indeuoured to liue purely before God, and righteously among men. And surely an euill conscience is as good as a thousande witnessies to accuse men of blockishnesse: that they may gather for a certaintie that they doe not earnestly and thoroughly beleue eternall life, after which they neuer long. He calleth it a conscience *aproscopon* that is without offence: where the seruants of God labour to remoue al lets which hinder their course. And he putteth two parts of this conscience. For there is a certaine inward sense or feeling, which beholdeth God alone: & thence commeth faithfulness and integritie, which we vse toward men. At length when he saith that he hath constantly followed as wel godlines in worshiping god, as iust dealing among men, he signifieth vnto vs that those do in deede hope for the last resurrection, who are neuer wearie of well doing. For this word *Alwayes* doth signifie perseuerance in a straight course.

17 *And after many yeares.* His meaning is that he had not of long time bin at Ierusalem, but was conuerfant in other countries farre distant, and that after long time hee came nowe to bring almes and to offer to God the sacrifice of thankses. Whereby doth also appeare their want of good nature & their vnthankfulness, because seeing he had by al meanes deserued the goodwill of all the whole nation, they recompence him so euill. This place doth expound the former, where mention was made of worshipping. For it is certaine that Paul came not purposely to offer in the Temple: because he purposed to do that after he was come. But he doth onely recite what the lewes founde in him, which was of greatest weight for the matter which was now in hand. At length when he saith that hee was found in the Temple doing this, and that, hauing first vsed solemne purging, and secondly, quietly without raising any tumult, he cleareth himselfe againe of both crimes. For his purifying did witnesse that hee did not pollute the Temple. And secondly for as much as hee did it quietlie without any multitude, there was no suspicion of tumult.

20 *Certaine Iewes.* This is an vnperfite speech: yet the sense is plaine, that these men of Asia as it should seeme, had caused a tumult without cause.

cause, of whose absence he complaineth: as if he should say, Yee which lay so many things to my charge, cannot tell how the matter standeth: but you bring before the iudgement seat of the gouernour a tale which was rashly beleueed. But those who are to bee blamed: for the matter, and who were as fannes to set all on fire, appeare not. After that Paul hath turned backe the crime vppon others, taking to himselfe a good courage, he doth nowe appeale vnto the aduersaries which are present, willing that if they know any thing by him, freely to utter it: though I dissent from Erasmus and the olde interpreter in the participle *stantes*, for they translate it in the present tence: and they expound the worde *synedrion* or Councel, of the sitting of the Gouernour, which I thinke, is farre from Paul his meaning. For his meaning is in my iudgement, that hee was readie to giue an account of all things in their councell. And that they knew nothing then which they can lay to his charge: because they began to sturre onely for this one voice, when he saide that he was iudged of the resurrection of the dead: that is, that hee suffered all this trouble for no other cause, saue onely because he did hope for the resurrection of the dead. Whereby it appeareth that they now coyne a newe accusation for no cause: because if there had bene in him any fault, they woulde not haue consealed it then. It is likelie that they had farther talke, and that they came nearer togither: because we shal see elsewhere that they did contende about Christ. But it was Luke his drift onely to declare howe well Paul had cleared himselfe of the false accusations of his accusers.

- 23 And when Felix hearde these things, hee deferred them, certainelie knowing those things which did appertaine vnto that way, and saide, When the chiefe captaine Lysias shall come I will thoroughly know your matter.
- 24 And he commanded a Centurion to keepe Paul, and that hee should suffer him to haue ease, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister to him, or to come to him.
- 25 And after certaine dayes, came Felix with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewesse, and hee called Paul, and hearde him concerning the faith which is in Christ.
- 26 And as he disputed of righteousness and temperance, and of iudgement to come, Felix trembled, and answered, For this time go thy way: and when I haue conuenient time, I will send for thee.
- 27 He hoped also that Paul would haue giuen him money, to loose him. Wherefore he sent for him the oftner, and communed with him.
- 28 And when two yeares were expyred Portius Festus came into Felix roome. And because Felix would do the Iewes a pleasure, he left Paul bound.

23 When Felix. It appeareth that Felix (though hee pronounced nothing concerning the matter) did perceiue that Paul was burdened with no fault of his owne, but with the malice of the Priestes. For when Luke saith that the matter was deferred vntill the coming of Lysias, he

he putteth in this in steed of a reason, that The ruler did perfectly know those thinges which did appertaine vnto the way : by which wordes I thinke is signified either that through long experience hee had beene acquainted with the conditions of the Priestes, and knewe full well howe they were wont to behaue themselves : or else that hee sawe by these things which had beene spoken on both sides, howe friuolous the accusation was : which is confirmed by the courteous and remisse vsage of Paul : for he putteth a Centurion in trust with him, that he may haue the more libertie. Others had rather reade it in one text in the person of Felix : When Lysias, who doth better knowe the trueth of this matter is come, I will then giue iudgement. But they fet and gather this racked sense from a reason which is scarce firme. They say that this word Way, is no where taken for the doctrine of the Lawe without some addition. But I doe not interpret it of the Law, but of those sectes whereof no strangers were ignorant. No man did doubt, but that the Pharisees did hold the immortalitie of the soule. Therefore seing it was a thing so common, no maruel if Felix doe acquit Paul. Furthermore it were hard to take Way, for the knowledge of the fact. And I see not howe this can hang together that the Gouvernour doth confesse that Lysias was more expert in the Law than he. But his innocencie is made more famous & euident by this, because a profane man did streightway giue such a prejudice thereof, that hee did suffer him to be visited and holpen by his friends, being as it were exempted from the order of prisoners. Also we gather by this that Paul his companions and the residue of the Church had not forsaken him. For to what end had it bin to grant libertie to his friends and acquaintance to haue access vnto him, vnlesse they had bin present, had shewed themselves to be carefull for him, and had bin desirous to do their dutie? Therefore let vs learne by this example, that so long as we may and are able, we must not defraud the martyrs of Christ of any manner of comfort, whiles they labour for the Gospel.

25 *Felix with his wife Drusilla.* We said somewhat already concerning the couetousnesse and corruptions of Felix. Nowe as touching his wife Drusilla, the readers must vnderstand that she was daughter to Agrippa the elder, of whose filthie death Luke spake before Chapt. 12. Shee was betrothed to Epiphanis the sonne of Antiochus. But for as much as the yonge man woulde not take on him the rites which the Iewes did vse, which he promised to doe, her brother Agrippa the younger (of whom mention shall bee made in the next Chapter) after the death of his father gaue her to wife to Azizus king of the Emesenes: from whose company she was enticed by the flattery of Felix. For Felix being taken with her singular bewtie, did perswade one Simon a Iewe borne in Cyprus to perswade and allure her to make a newe match. Therefore it came to passe that this voluptuous woman hauing broken promise with her former husbände, did marrie with an vncircumcised man, contrarie to the Law. But though she had polluted her selfe with prophane wedlock, yet we may easily coniect by this place that shee had not quite abandoned that feeling of religion which she had of a childe.

Chap. 12. 23

For Felix would neither haue desired to heare Paul, neither would he haue vouchsafed to speake to him, vnlesse it had beene for his wiues sake. Luke doth not expresse thus much, but in that he nameth Drusilla, we may well gather that Paul was called for her sake, that he might dispute of the gospell. Though such reuolts be rather tickled with curiosity, than moued with a sincere desire to learne.

He heard him touching the faith. This confession of Paul doth witnesse that hee did not spare to speake of Christ before, because he was afraid, or because hee would escape the trouble of the crosse: but because it was not yet time to speake. Seeing hee was cited vnto the iudgement seate to aunswere for himselfe, it stood him vpon to aunswere concerning the crimes which were objected to him, that hee might afterward frankly and freely professe the faith of Christ. Therefore when he nowe seeth the gate set open and opportunitie offered for speaking, he is not affraide to offende the Gouvernour, neither is hee terified with daunger, that hee doeth crauillie make as if hee were not a Christian. Therefore wee see that hee was as well furnished with inuincible constancie, as with wisdom and iudgement: neither did hee euer of set purpose suppress the light of the Gospell, but did onely make choice of the time.

Nowe the wonderfull counsell of God is woorth the noting in this place, who will haue the Gospell offered sometimes to the reprobate: not that they may profite thereby, but rather that they may be made inexcusable. It had bin better for Felix and Drusilla neuer to haue heard any thing concerning Christ: because they did not escape without punishment for refusing the grace of saluation which was offered to them, or for neglecting the same with loathsomnesse. Furthermore wee must note this, that certaine by reason of that seede of godlinesse which is in thein ingendred, do desire to heare the Gospell preached, which so sone as they haue heard, they doe by and by either loath or else they cannot suffer it. Neuerthelesse the preaching of the Gospell, (what successe so euer it haue) is a good and sweete sauour to Gods whether it quicken,

2, Cor. 2. 15. or kill men.

26 And as he disputed. Felix hoped that he should take some delight in Pauls sermon: as men who are desirous of new things, doe willinglie feede their eares with subtile disputations; also hee meant to satisfie his wiues desire without his owne trouble: now he is enforced to feele the force of the worde of God whereof he neuer thought, which driueth away all his delightes. Paule out of bondes disputeth of the iudgement of God: hee which had power to put him to death or to saue his life, is afraid and quaketh as if he stood before his owne iudge: neither doth he finde, any other comfort, but to send him away out of his sight. Let vs first learne by this, what great force of the Spirite of God there was both in the heart and also in the tongue of Paul, because he seeth that hee must speake in the name of Christ; hee doeth not behaue himselfe like an vnderling: but hee declareth the ambassage which was enioyned him, with a grace, as from on high, and hauing forgotten that

that he was in bondes, hee denounceth the heauenly iudgement in the person of Christ: And now seeing Felix his heart is so pricked with the voyce of a prisoner, the maiestie of the Spirit doeth shew it selfe in that also, which Christ extolleth: when the Spirite shall come he shall iudge the worlde &c. and that force of prophesying, which the same Paule setteth forth elsewhere. Also that is fulfilled which he saith in another place, that The worde of God was not bounde with him: which hee did not onely stoutly maintaine and affirme to bee true, but which did effectually pearce into the heartes of men (and that of such as were proude of their greatnesse) as if it did lighten from heauen. Againe wee must note that although the reprobate bee stricken with the iudgement of God, yet are they not renewed vnto repentance by that terrour alone. Felix is touched in deed when he heareth that God shall be the iudge of the world: yet hee flieth therewithall from his iudgement feare: (whereof he is afraide) so that this is feigned sorrow which doeth not worke saluation. Therefore repentance requireth such feare as may both engender a voluntarie hatred of sinne, and may also present a man before God, that he may willingly suffer himselfe to bee iudged by his worde. And this is a token of true profiting when the sinner seeketh for medicine there, from whence hee receiued his wounde. Furthermore this place doth teach that men are then examined & tried to the quick, when their vices wherewith they are infected are brought to light, and their consciences are called backe vnto the iudgement to come. For when Paule disputeth of righteousness and temperance, hee did rubbe Felix sore vppon the gall: forasmuch as he was both a man giuen to filthie pleasure, and also to dissolute riot; and giuen ouer vnto iniquitie.

27 Hoping that money. Though Felix had thoroughly tried Pauls integrity, so that hee was ashamed to take money of the Iewes for condemning him: yet forasmuch as hee was a couetous man, and a man giuen to corruptions, he would not acquite him for nothing: for this cause he doeth often call Paule, that hee may with faire words put him in some hope of deliuerance. For iudges which gape after money doe insinuate themselves thus, when as they will make way for corruptions. Whence we gather that it was but a vaine and transitorie feare, wherewith Felix was taken when hee heard Paul dispute: seeing hope of gaine doeth compell him to call for him, whom he was enforced with feare to send away. Howe did Felix hope for some rewarde at the handes of a poore man, and one that was destitute? for that goulfe would not haue beene content with a small pray. I doe not doubt but that (as those who haue the Lawe and right to sell are wittie and can perceiue things) when hee saw the Iewes did make such earnest suite to haue Paul put to death, he smelled somewhat a faile off touching him: to wit, that hee was none of the common sort; but such a man as was in great fauour with manie. Wherefore he did not doubt but that many of his friends would willingly bestow cost, to redeme him.

1. Cor. 14.
24.

28 And when two yeares were expired. Seeing Paul knew that the Iudge
Nn 3 who

who did gape for gaine, would be fauourable to him so sone as he should offer him money, & seing he had sufficient time to gather the same: it is likely that hee did not onely beare with the Brethren, but also detest such briberie, wherewith the holinesse of ciuill order is shamefully polluted. Nowe whereas gouernours vse to let lose such prisoners as they know are not guiltie when they goe from the prouince: Felix tooke the contrarie way to winne fauour. The Iewes had often complained of his filthie gaine, of his extortion, cruelty, and vnrule gouernement. Claudius Cesar being wearied with so many complaints, did call him out of Iudea. To the end the Iewes may not spite him so sore, he leaueth Paul bounde. So that hee maketh the guiltlesse seruauant of God as it were an offering for his euill deedes, that hee may therewithall appeale the Priests.

CHAP. XXV.

- 1 **T**hen when Festus was come into the prouince, after three dayes he went vp to Ierusalem from the Citie of Cesarea.
- 2 And the high Priests and the chiefe Iewes enformed him of Paul, & besought him,
- 3 Desiring fauour against him, that he would sende for him to Ierusalem: laying await to kill him by the way.
- 4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, & that he himself would goe thither shierly.
- 5 Therefore let them (saith he) which are able among you, go downe with me: and if there be any fault in this man let them accuse him.
- 6 And after that he had staid more than tenne dayes among them, he went down to Cesarea: and on the morrow he sate downe in the iudgement seat, and commanded Paul to be brought.
- 7 Who being come, those Iewes which came, from Ierusalem stood about him, laying many and great crimes to Pauls charge: which they could not proue.
- 8 For as much as hee answered that hee had neither offended any thing against the Law of the Iewes, neither against the Temple, neither against Cesar.

1 Then when Festus. The seconde action is described in this place, wherein Paul hath as hard a cumbate, and is in no lesse daunger then in the first. Seing he was left in bondes, Festus might suspect that the cause was doubtfull, and so gather an vniust preiudice. But there was another thing which was cause of greater daunger. Wee know that newe rulers, because they will winne the fauour of those who are in the prouinces, vse to grant them many thinges at their first comming; so that it was to be thought that the death of Paul, should be to Festus a fine meane to winne fauour withall. Therefore the faith of the holy man is assailed afresh with a newe triall, as if the promise had beene vaine whereto hee had

had hitherto trusted; but the grace of god doth so much the more plainly shewe it selfe in deliuering him, because, contrarie to all hope, hee is deliuered out of the iawes of death. The Iewes preuent the gouerniour with their false accusations: yet they doe not as yet seeke to haue him punished, but they doe onely desire, that hee may not bee brought into any forraine court to plead his cause. They desire that ambitiously as a great benefite, which was to looke to equal. How is it then that they do not obtaine, saue onely because God doth holde the minde of Festus, so that he doth stoutly deny that, which he was afterward readie to graunt? And as the Lord did then holde his mind bound with the secreat bridle of his prouidence: so when hee graunted him freedome of will, he bounde his handes, that hee could not execute that which hee would. Let this confidence support vs in daungers, and let it also stirre vs vp to call vpon God: and let this make our mindes quiet and calme, in that the Lord in stretching forth his hand and breaking such a strong conspiracie, did shew an eternal example of his power in defending his.

5 *Those therefore.* It is in the Greek worde forward, Those who are mightie or able: yet he meaneth those who can conueniently. Also wee may easily coniect, that they did obiekt the trouble and charges, and besought the Gouernour that he would not make weary with a superfluous journey so many of their chiefe men, and also certaine which were verie aged but would rather (which hee might easily doe) commaund Paul to be brought by a fewe keepers. Therefore least they complaine that he is burdenous vnto them, hee vnloadeth them of this necessitie, and giueth them leaue to choose out from among themselves such as they will. In the meane season he doth sufficiently declare, that he doth not beleue their false reports: and he professeth that he will bee an vp-right iudge, and will do nothing but according to the truth of the matter. The next sentence also is diuersly read among the Grecians. For some bookes haue the same which is in the olde interpreter, But eight or tenne dayes. If this reading like vs, the sense shalbe, that The gouernour came shortly after to Cesarea, least the Iewes should be importunate vpon him vnder colour of his long tariance. The other reading which is more vsuall among the Grecians, shall haue another meaning: Though he stayed long inough at Ierusalem to heare the matter, yet did hee not harken to their requestes, who would haue Paule brought thither, whence we may gather a probable coniecture, that hee already knew of their laying await.

7 *Manie and greuous crimes.* So long as Paule liued vnder the Lawe his integritie was well knowne and famous. Again when hee was conuerted to Christ, he was a singular patterne of innocencie. Yet wee see howe he is subiect to many slanders, cruel & false accusations. And this is almost alwaies the estate of the seruants of Christ: wherfore they must be the more couragious to passe valiantly through euill report and good report: neither let them thinke it strange to bee euill reported of where they haue done good.

In the meane season they must do their indeuour, that they may not onely haue a cleare conscience before God, but that they may be verie well able to defende themselues before men, when they haue time and place. For Paul doth not faile in his cause: but couragiously setteth the defense of his innocencie against their false crimes. Furthermore let vs note that the wicked can neuer bee bridled, but they will speake euill of good men, and will impudently slander them: for they resemble the nature of Satan, by whose spirit they are led. Therefore where as wee be commanded to stoppe the mouth of the wicked, it must not be so taken, as if hee shall be free from all backbiting, whosoeuer shall behaue himselfe vprightly: but that our life may aunswere for vs, and may wipe away al blots of false infamie. So we see the aduersaries of Paul, though they had a fauourable iudge, yet their slanders were all in yaine, seeing he did defende and auouch his innocencie by his deedes. And yet it is likely that they wanted not false witnesses, neither were they slacke in suborning them: but because the Lorde giueth his seruantes inuincible strength, so that the brightnesse of honestie doeth driue away their vaine clouds: they are ashamed, and at length they depart from the iudgement seat with this infamie, that they were false accusars. But the defense of Paul doeth shewe what things the Iewes laide principally to his charge. The first crime was vngodlinesse against God, that he ouerthrew the Lawe and polluted the Temple: the other, rebellion against Cesar, and the Romane Empyre, because hee raised tumultes euerie where. Hee was holpen by the singular grace of God to aunswere and refute both, who maketh the innocencie of his as bright as the morning.

- 9 And Festus being willing to doe the Iewes a pleasure, answered Paule and saide, wilt thou goe vp to Ierusalem and there bee iudged of these things before me?
- 10 But Paule saide, I stande before Cæsars iudgement seate, where I must bee iudged. To the Iewes haue I done no wronge, as thou thy selfe knowest full well.
- 11 And if I do iniurie, or haue committed any thing worthie of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be nothing of these thinges whereof they accuse mee, no man can deliuer me to them. I appeale to Cesar.
- 12 Then spake Festus with the Councell and saide, Hast thou appealed to Cesar? To Cesar shalt thou goe.

9 And Festus. Whether Festus knew somewhat of their laying awaite (which we may well coniect,) or whether hee were altogether ignorant thereof: he dealeth vniustly with Paul: and we see how soone those are drawne vnto all corruption, which are not guided by the spirit of God. For Festus doeth not openly contemne or hate Paul: but ambition, and peraduenture also desire of gain got the vpper hand, so that for pleasing the other party, he doth vniustly bring him in danger of death: also it is likely

likely that he was enticed with the smel of som reward to haikē so courteously to the priestes. Notwithstanding I maruell that he giueth Paul leaue to choose, and doth not rather according to this authoritie commaund them to carry him whether he would or no. Surely wee gather that he was kept backe with feare, least he should infringe the priuilege of the citie of Rome, which was a very odious crime. Notwithstanding he studieth craftilie to persuaue Paul not to refuse to be iudged at Ierusalem. For he was not ignorant of that which indeed came to passe, that a citizen of Rome might lawfully appeale, so that he could then goe no farther. Neuerthelesse it was no thanke to him that hee was not deliuered into the hands of murtherers.

to I stand at Cæsars iudgement seat. Because Paul seeth that hee is betraied into the hands of the Iewes through the ambition of the gouernour, he obiecteth the priuilege of the citie of Rome. Hee had submitted himselfe modestly, if he had commaunded him to do that which was iust and equall. Nowe because the gouernour doeth not his duetie willingly: necessitie compelleth the holy man to defend himself by law: and by this meanes the Lorde deliuereth him nowe againe euen when he was almost giuen ouer into the hands of the enemies. And whereas he desireth to haue his matter handled before Cæsars iudgement seat: he doth not therefore make the doctrine of the Gospell subiect to the iudgement of a profane and wicked man: but beeing readie to giue an account of his faith euery where: he appealeth from that court where he could no longer hope for equitie. Furthermore though the Citizens of Rome did retaine their priuilege: yet the order was then altered: because the Cæsars had taken into their owne handes the iudging of the people, as if they would bee good maintainers and patrons of common libertie.

To the Iewes hiane I done. Because those whose consciences do accuse them, and which mistrust their matter, flie vnto certaine odde excuses and exceptions. Paul turneth away from himself this opinion. And surely the ministers of Christ, ought to haue no lesse care to make their innocencie knowen, then to saue their life. If Paul had flatly denied to answer for himselfe, the enemies would haue triumphed, and the doubtfullnesse of an euill conscience should haue been obiected to him to the reproch of the Gospell. But now when he citeth the gouernour himselfe to be a witness of his integritie, and doth refuse no punishment, if hee shall be found gyltie, he cutteth off all occasion of slanderous reportes. Therefore he sheweth that he doth not seek to saue himselfe by turning his back, but flieth vnto the fortreffe of a iust defence, that he may ther saue himselfe from iniurie, seeing his aduersaries haue hitherto handled him vniustly: and now refusing to deale with him any longer by law they goe about to haue him murthered. Neither doth Paul go behinde the Presidents back to tell him that he doth vniustly, in that he doth so dally with his accusers: and therewithal he doth as it were bridle his lust, so that he dare goe no further.

31. I appeale vnto Cæsar. After that he hath professed that hee doth
not

not refuse to die if hee bee found guiltie, hee freely vseth such helpes as he coulde finde at the hands of men. Wherefore if wee bee at any time brought into like straits, we must not be superstitious, but we may craue help of the lawes and polittike order. Because it is written that magistrates are made and appointed by God to the praise of the godly. Neither was Paul afraid to goe to law vnder an vnbeleeuing iudge: for hee which appealeth commenceth a new action.

Rom. 13.3.
& 1. Pet. 2.

14.

Therefore let vs know that God who hath appointed iudgement seates doth also graunt libertie to his to vse the same lawfully. Therefore those mistake Paul, who thinke that he doth flatly condemne the Corinthians, because they require help of the magistrate for defence of their right, seeing he reproveth in that place a manifest fault, to wit, because they could suffer no wrong, and because they were too much set vpon suing one another, whereby they caused the gospel to be euill spoken of.

1. Cor. 6.1.

12 *Festus having talked with the counsell.* The gouernours did vse to haue certain of the chief citizens which did attend vpon them, & sate with them in iudgement: that they might decree nothing without the consent of the counsell. Furthermore it doth seeme that Festus pronouced this with indignation, when hee said interrogatiuely, hast thou appealed to Caesar? to wit, because it greued him that he could not doe the Iewes such a pleasure as he desired: though I leaue that indifferent because it is neither of any great importance, and it leaneth only to a coniecture.

13 *And after certaine dayes, King Agrippa and Bernice came to Cesarea, to salute Festus.*

14 *And when they had stayed there many dayes, Festus rehearsed Pauls cause to the King, saying, There is a certaine man left in bonds of Felix.*

15 *About whom, when I came to Ierusalem, the high priestes and Elders of the Iewes informed me, requiring iudgement against him,*

16 *To whom I answered, It is not the custome of the Romanes, for sauour to deliuer any man, that he should perishe, before he that is accused haue his accusers face to face, and haue licence to answer for himselfe, concerning the crime laid against him.*

17 *Therefore when they were come hither without delay, on the morow I sate on the iudgement seat, and commaunded the man to be brought.*

18 *Against whom when the accusers stood vp, they brought none accusation concerning such things as I supposed:*

19 *But they had certain questions concerning their superstition against him, and concerning one Iesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to bee a liue.*

20 *And because I doubted of this question, I asked him if he would goe to Ierusalem, and there be iudged of these things.*

21 *And when Paul had appealed, that he might be kept vnto the knowledge of Augustus, I commaunded him to be kept vntil I might send him vnto Caesar.*

Or Reli-
gion.

13 *And after certaine dayes.* This long narration tendeth to this end, that we may know, that though the handling of the cause were broken of,

of, yet were Pauls bands famous: and that he was neuertheless brought out of prison, that he might make profession of his faith; & dispute touching the Gospell before a famous auditories, and againe that though he were contemned, yet was he not counted a wicked person, least the glory of Christ shuld be abased by his slander and reproch, yea that he had more libertie to preach the gospell being in prison, then if hee had liued free in a priuate house.

King Agrippa and Bernice. It is certaine that this Agrippa was sonne to Agrippa the elder, whose filthie and detestable death was set downe in the twelfth chapter. When this man was made king of Chalcis in his vncles steed after the decease of his father: hee did afterward obtaine a more large dominion. Bernice, of whom mentio is made in this place, was his owne naturall sister, which was first married to: Herod king of Chalcis her vnkle, and did keep her self widdow a certaine season after his death, yet she did not liue honestly & chastly during that time; for her too great familiaritie with her brother Agrippa was suspected. And to the end she might not be counted an incestuous person, she married with Polemon king of Cilicia. Norwithstanding because she gaue herself more to lust than chastitie, she forsooke him. The historiographers doe nowhere say, that she was her brothers wife: and Iosephus in his life assigneth her a dominion of her owne in a part of Galilee. Therefore it is to be thought that forasmuch as they were hardened in their wickednesse, they dwelt together not regarding what men did say: yet did they abstain from marriage, least their incestuous marriage shoulde bewraye and also augment their crime. Neither is it any maruell that hee came for honours sake to salute the gouernour, who did reigne only at the will and pleasure of another, and did depend vpon the necke and fauour of the Emperour of Rome, which he was to retain and nourish by means of the gouernour.

14 *When many dayes.* Therefore when (after some time was spent) they wanted matter of talk, as idle men vse to inuent somewhat whereon they may talke, mention was made of Paul, for Luke meant to heere that, when he said that after many dayes were idly spent, Festus told the king of a certaine man which lay bound. And although hee doth heere both touch the malice of the Priests, and also make a shew of wonderfull equitie on his part, yet in that hee shortly after clearli the partie which was accused, he condemneth himselfe vnawares, when as he confesseth that he was enforced to appeale that he might not be carried to Ierusalem:

But when Festus commendeth the Romanes, he sheweth what doth besee me iudges. And if nature did tel profane men thus much, that they must admit no such fauour as may oppresse the guiltlesse: howe much more must iudges, (who haue the light of the word of God) be carefull to auoide all corruption.

18 *They laid no such crime to his charge.* I maruell why Festus doeth say that there was no sicke crime objected to Paul as hee supposed, seeing he was accused of sedition: but we may againe coniect by this, yea,

yea, plainly know that their accusations were so vaine, that they ought not to haue been brought before the iudgement seat: as if a man did vtter a slanderous speech vnaduisedly. For which cause he saith that the state of the cause did consist in questions of the law. Therefore wee see that he putterh a difference betweene those offences which were wont to be punished by mans lawes, and the controuersie which was betweene Paul and the Iewes: not that religion ought to bee corrupted freely, or that their malapartnesse is tollerable, who ouerthrowe the worship of god with their owne inuentions: but because the man being a Romane, cared not for Moses lawe: therefore hee speaketh so disdainfully when he saith, that they did striue about their superstition. Though this word *deisdaimonia* bee taken of the Grecians as well in good as euill part: to wit, because the choice of worshippings of false gods were common in all places. Norwithstanding his meaning is that he careth not what maner religion the Iewes haue. And no maruell if a man which was an Ethnick and had not learned that the rule of godlinesse must bee fet from the mouth of God, know not how to distinguish between the pure worship of God, and superstitions.

Wherefore we must hold fast that marke whereby wee may discerne the one from the other, that there is no godlines but that which is grounded in the knowledge of faith, least we grabble in darknesse. Moreover the Romans were so drunkē with prosperous successe, that they thought that they were more acceptable to God then any other: as at this day, the Turks by reason of their manifolde victories deride the doctrine of Christ. This was a lamentable case, that a man being an vnbele cuer and idolater, sitteth as iudge amidst the Iewes, to giue iudgement of the sacred oracles of God according to his ignorance, but all the fault was in Paul his aduersaries, who did not care for the maiestie of God, so they might satisfie and obey their owne madnesse. Nothwithstanding there rested nothing for Paul to doe, but to cleare himselfe of those crimes which were laide against him. So at this day though inwarde brawles which are among Christians, doe defame the name of Christe and his Gospell among the Turkes and Iewes; yet the defenders of holy doctrine are vnworthily blamed, which are enforced to enter the combat.

Of one Iesus. It is not to bee doubted but that Paul intreated both grauely and with such vehemencie as became him of the resurrection of Christe: But Festus by reason of his pride, thought it no meet matter for him to occupie his head about. Hee doth not in deed openly deride Paul, but he sheweth plainly how negligently he heard him when he disputed of Christ. Wherby we see, how little preaching auaieth, yea that it auaieth nothing at all, vnlesse the Spirit of God doe inwardly touch the hearts of men. For the wicked do lightly passe ouer whatsoeuer is spoken, as if a man should tell them a tale of Robin Hood: Wherefore there is no cause why the carelesnesse of many shoulde trouble vs at this day, seeing Paul preuailed nothing with Festus. But this place doth witness: that many speeches did passe in the handling of the matter; whereof

Luke

Luke maketh no mention. For he had spoken nothing as yet of Christ; and yet this latter narration doth shewe that Paul intreated seriouslye before the Iewes of his death and resurrection. Which could not bee, but hee must needs intreate of the principall pointes of the Gospel. Therefore I gesse that Paul did so handle the matter, that when he had refuted the false accusations of the Iewes, wherewith they went about to burden him before the gouernour, hauing gotten a fit occasion, hee began afterward to speake freely of Christ.

22 And Agrippa said vnto Festus, I would also my self hear the man. To morrow saith he, thou shalt heare him.

23 And on the morrow when Agrippa was come and Bernice with great pompe, and was entred into the common hall with the chiefe captaines, and the principall men of the citie: at Festus commaundement Paul was brought.

24 And Festus saith, king Agrippa; and all men which are present with vs see this man; about whome all the multitude of the Iewes haue called vpon mee, both at Ierusalem and beere, crying that hee ought not to liue any longer.

25 Yet haue I found that he hath committed nothing worthie of death. And because hee hath appealed vnto Augustus, I haue determined to sende him.

26 Of whom I haue no certaine thing to write vnto my Lord. Wherefore I haue brought him forth vnto you, and chiefly vnto thee O king Agrippa; that after examination had, I may haue somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me an vnmeet thing, to send a prisoner, and not to shew the crimes wherof he is accused.

22 I would also. By this we may gather that Agrippa did so desire to hear Paul that he was ashamed to make his desire knowne, least Festus should thinke that he came for some other end then to salute him. And it may be that not only curiositie did moue him to be desirous to heare Paul, but because he did hope to profite by hearing him. Notwithstanding we may easily gather by this, how cold his desire was, because hee suffered many dayes to passe before he sheweth any signe of his desire: because he was more in loue with earthly commodities which he counted better. Neither durst he make any wordes, neither did he passe for vttering any speech vntill such time as Festus did of his owne accorde will him so to doe. So that the holy minister of Christ is brought forth as on a stage, that a profane man may cheare vppon his guests: saue onely that Festus wil be holpen with the aduise of Agrippa and his company, that he may let Caesar vnderstand how diligent hee is. But the matter was turned to another end by the secreete prouidence of God: neither need we doubt, but that such report went abroad, as made much for the confirmation of the godly, and it may be also that some of the hearers were touched, and did conceiue seed of faith, which did afterward bring forth frute in due time. But admit none of them did embrace Christ sincerely & from his heart, this was no small profit, that the vnskilfull were appeased after that the malice of the enemies was discouered, that they

they might not be enflamed with such hatred against the gospel: impietie was made ashamed, and the faithfull did gather newe strength, so that they were confirmed more and more in the gospel.

23 *And on the morrow:* Agrippa and his sister do not come like humble disciples of Christ: but they bring with them such pompe and gorgeousnesse, as may stop their eares and blind their eyes: and it is to be thought that like hautesse of minde was ioyned with that gorgeous & great pompe. No maruell therefore if they were not brought to obey Christ. Notwithstanding it seemeth that Luke maketh mention of the pompe, that we might know that in a great assembly, and before choise: witnesses whose authority was great, Paul had leaue graunted not onely to plead his matter as a partie defendant, but also to preach the gospel. For he commeth forth as in the person of a teacher, that he may set forth the name of Christ. So that the trueth of God brake out of his bands, which was forthwith spread abroad euery where with a free course: yea it came euen vnto vs. By this word *phantasia* Luke vnderstandeth that which wee call commonly preparation or pompe. But there must other furniture be brought vnto the spirituall marriage of Iesus Christ.

26 *That after examination had.* We cannot tell whether the gouerner in acquitting Paul before them, doth seek by this pollicie to entice him to let his appeale fall. For it was a thing credible, that he might easily be perswaded to lay away feare, and to submit himself to the iudgement and discretion of a iust iudge, especially if Agrippa should giue his friendly consent. To what end soeuer he did it, he condemneth himselfe of iniquitie by his owne mouth, in that he did not let a guiltlesse man go free, whom hee is now ashamed to sende vnto Cæsar, hauing nothing to lay against him. This did also come to passe by the wonderfull prouidence of God that the Iewes themselues shold giue a former iudgment on Pauls side. Paraduventure the Gouernor goeth subtilly to worke that hee may picke out what the kinge, and the chiefe men of Cesarea doe think: that if it so fall out that Paul be set at liberty, he may lay the blame on their neckes. For he woulde not haue the priests to be his enemies: for nothing, vpon whom a good part of Ierusalem did depend, and that was the best way that he could take in writing to Cæsar, to interminge the authoritie of Agrippa. But the Lord (to who it belongeth to gouern euents contrary to mans expectatiō) had respect vnto another thing, to wit, that when the clowdes of false accusations were driuen away, Paul might more freely auouch sound doctrine.

CHAP. XXVI.

1 **A**ND Agrippa said vnto Paul, Thou art permitted to answer for thy selfe. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and answered for himselfe.

2 I thinke my selfe happy, O King Agrippa, because I shall answer this day before thee, of all the things whereof I am accused of the Iewes.

- 3 Seeing thou art most expert in all those customes and questions which are among the Iewes. Wherefore I beseech thee heare me patiently.
- 4 My life which I haue led from my youth, which was at the first in mine owne nation at Ierusalem, know all the Iewes.
- 5 Who knew me before since the beginning, if they would testifie, that after the most straight sect of our religion I liued a Pharisee.
- 6 And now I stand subiect to iudgement for the hope of the promise which God made to our fathers.
- 7 Whereunto our twelue tribes seruing God instantly day and night, hope to come: for which hope, O king Agrippa, I am accused of the Iewes.
- 8 Why doth it seeme to you a thing incredible, if God raise the dead.

2 We haue declared to what end Paul was brought before that assembly: to wit, that Festus might write vnto Cesar as he shoulde be counsailed by Agrippa and the rest. Therefore he doth not vse any plain or vsuall forme of defence, but doeth rather apply his speech vnto doctrine. Luke vseth in deeda worde of excusing: yet such a one as is nothing inconuenient whensoever there is any account giuen of doctrine. Furthermore, because Paul knew well that Festus did let light by al that which should be taken out of the law and prophets, he turneth himselfe vnto the king, who he hoped would be more attentiu; seeing he was no stranger to the Iewish religion. And because hee had hitherto spoken to deaf men. He reioyceth now that he hath gotten a man who for his skill and experience can iudge aright. But as hee commendeth the skill and knowledge, which is in Agrippa, because he is a lawfull iudge in those matters whereof he is to speake: so he desireth him on the other side to heare him patiently. For other wise contempt and loathsomnesse shuld haue been lesse excusable in him. Hee calleth those points of doctrine which were handeled among the Scribes, questions: who were wont to discusse religion more subtilly. By the word *customes* he meaneth those rites which were common to the whole nation. Therefore the summe is this, that king Agrippa was not ignorant either in doctrine, either in the ceremonies of the law. That which he bringeth in or concludeth, wherefore I pray thee heare me patiently, (as I saide euen nowe) doeth signifie that the more expert a man is in the Scripture, the more attentiu must hee bee, when the question is about religion. For that which we vnderstand doth not trouble vs so much. And it is meete that we be so careful for the worship of god, that it doe not grieue vs to heare those things which belong to the defining thereof: and chieflie when we haue learned the principles: so that we may readily iudge, if we list, to take heed.

4 My life which I haue led. Hee doeth not as yet enter into the state of the cause: but because hee was wrongfully accused and burdened with many crimes, leaste kyng Agrippa shoulde enuie the cause through hatred of the person, hee doeth first atouch his innocencie:

For

For we know that when a sinister suspitio hath once possessed the minds of men, all their senses are so shut vppe, that they can admit nothing. Therefore Paul doeth first driue away the cloudes of an euill opinion, which were gathered of false reports, that he may be heard of pure and well purged eares. By this we see that Paul was enforced by the necessitie of the cause, to commend his life which he had lead before. But he standeth not long vpon that point: but passeth ouer straightway vnto the resurrection of the dead, when he saith, that he is a Pharisee. And I think that that is called the most straight sect, not in respect of holines of life, but because there was in it more naturall sinceritie of doctrine, and greater learning. For they did boast that they knew the secret meaning of the scripture. And surely forasmuch as the Sadduces did vaunt that they did sticke to the letter, they fell into filthie and grosse ignorance, after they had darkened the light of the scripture. The Essenes contenting themselves with an austere and straight kinde of life, dyd not greatly care for doctrine. Neither doth that any whit hinder, because Christ inueigheth principally against the Pharisees, as being the worst corrupters of the scripture. For seeing they did challenge to themselves authoritie to interpret the scripture according to the hidden & secrete meaning: hence came that boldnesse to change and innouate, wherewith the Lord is displeased. But Paul doeth not touch those inuentions, which they had rashly inuented, and which they vrged with tyrannous rigour: For it was his purpose to speake only of the resurrection of the dead. For though they had corrupted the law in many points: yet it was meete, that the authoritie of that sect should be of more estimation in defending the sound and true faith, then of the other which were departed farther from naturall puritie: Moreouer Paul speaketh only of the common iudgement, which did respect the colour of more subtilie knowledge.

6. *For the hope of the promise.* Hee doth now discend into the cause, to wit, that he laboureth for the principall point of faith. And though hee seeme to haue spoken generally of the resurrection, yet we may gather out of the text, that he beginneth with a farther point: and that he did comprehend those circumstances, which did properly appertain vnto the faith of the gospel. He complaineth that the Iewes did accuse him, because hee maintained the hope of the promise made to the fathers. Therefore this was the beginning and also the issue of the matter, that the couenant which God had made with the fathers, is referred vnto eternall saluation. Wherefore this was the summe of the disputation, that the Iewish religion was nothing worth, vnlesse they tooke heed to the heauens, and did also lift vp their eies vnto Christe the authour of the new life. They did boast that they were chosen from among all people of the worlde. But their adoption did profite them nothing, vnlesse they did trust to the promised Mediatour, and looke vnto the inheritance of the kingdom of god. Therefore we must conceiue much more then Luke doth plainly expresse. And surely his narration tendereth to no other end, saue only that we may know of what thinges Paul intrea-

red. But what this was, and in what words he uttered it, wee cannot tell, Neuertheles it behoueth vs to gather out of a briefe summe those things which appertaine vnto this disputation: which was freely handled before Agrippa, when Paul had free liberrie graunted to him to plead his owne cause.

7 *Whereunto our twelue tribes.* Paul complaineth before Agrippa, that the state of the church is come to that passe that the Priestes set themselves against the common hope of all the faithfull: as if he should say, to what ende doe those of our nation, who worshippe God carefullie, and spend both dayes and nights in the duties of godlinesse, sigh in their prayers; saue onely that they may at length come vnto eternall life? But the same is the marke whereat I aime in all my doctrine: because when the grace of redemption is set before men, the gate of the kingdome of heauen is set open therewithall. And when I preach the authour of saluation raised vp from the dead, I offer the first frutes of immortalitie in his person. So that the former confirmation of his doctrine was taken out of the worde of God, when hee cited the promise made to the fathers. Now in the second place he addeth the consent of the church. And this is the best way to maintaine and auouch the opinions of faith, that the authoritie of God go formost: and that then the consent of the church come next. Though we ought therewithall wisely to make choise of the true church: as Paul doeth teache vs in this place by his owne example: for though hee knewe that the Priestes did pretend the visure of the church against him: yet hee doeth boldly affirme that the sincere worshippers of God are on his side, and he is content with their defence. For when hee meaneth the twelue tribes hee doeth not speake generally of al those which came of Iacob according to the fleshe: but hee meaneth those onely, which did retaine the true studie of godlinesse. For it had been an vnmeet thing to commend the nation generally for the feare of G O D, which was onelie in a few.

The Papists deale very disorderedly in both: who by the voyces and consents of men, oppresse the woorde of God, and giue also the name and tytle of the catholike church, to a filthie rabblement of vnlearned and impure men, without any colour or shame: but if wee will prooue that we thinke as the true church thinketh, wee must beginne with the Prophetes and Apostles: then those must bee gathered vnto them whose godlinesse is known and manifest. If the Pope and his Clergie be not on our side, wee neede not greatly to care. And the true affection of true religion is proued by continuance & vehemencie: which was of singular force at that time, principally when the Iewes were in greatest miserie.

8 *Why should hee.* I doe not doubt but that he proued that both by reason and also by testimonies of scripture, which hee taught concerning the resurrection and the heauenly life. But for good causes doth hee call backe those vnto whom hee speaketh, vnto the power of God, least they iudge thereof according to their owne weak capacitye.

For nothing can more hardly sink into mens braines, then that mens bodies shall bee restored when as they bee once consumed. Therefore seeing it is a misterie farre surpassing mans wit, let the faithfull remember howe farre the infinite power of God doth reach, and not what they themselues comprehend: as the same Paul teacheth in the third chapter to the Philippians. For when hee hath said that our vile bodies shall bee made like to the glorious bodye of Christe, hee addeth immediately, according to the mightie working whereby hee is able to subdue all thinges to him selfe. But men are for the most part iniurious to God, who wil not haue his arme reach any farther, then their vnderstanding and reason can reache: so that so much as in them lieth they would desire to restraine the greatnesse of his workes (which surpasseth heauen and earth) vnto their straites. But on the other side Paul commaundeth vs to consider what God is able to do, that being lifted vpe above the world, we may learne to conceiue the faith of the resurrection not according to the weake capacitie of our minde, but according to his omnipotencie.

- 9 And I verily thoughte that I oughte to doe many thinges against the name of Iesus of Nazareth.
- 10 Which thing I also did at Ierusalem, and I shut vpe many of the Saints in prison, hauing receiued power from the high priestes: and when they were put to death I gaue sentence.
- 11 And punishing them oftentimes throughout all Synagogues I enforced, the to blaspheme: and being yet more mad vpon them, I did persecute them euen into strange cities.
- 12 And as I went to Damascus for this intent with authoritie and commission of the high priestes:
- 13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heauen, passing the brightnessse of the Sunne, shine rounde about mee, and those which iourneied with mee.
- 14 And when we were all falne to the earth, I heard a voice speaking vnto mee and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou mee? It is hard for thee to kick against prickes.
- 15 And I said: who art thou Lord? But he said vnto me, I am Iesus whom thou persecutest.
- 16 But rise and stand vpon thy feete, for to this ende did I appeare vnto thee, that I may make thee a minister and witnesse both of those thinges which thou hast seene, and also of those thinges wherein I will appeare vnto thee.
- 17 Deliuering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, vnto whom now I send thee.
- 18 That thou mayest open their eye, that they may bee converted from darknessse to light, and from the power of Satan vnto God, that they may receiue forgivenessse of sinnes, and an inheritance among those who are sanctified, by the faith which is in me.
- 9 And I truly, If Paul had not spoken more thinges then those which

which Luke hath hitherto recited, his speech had not changed well together. Whence we proue that which was said before, that after that he had spoken of the covenant of God, hee intreated of the grace and office of Christe, as the matter required. And hee repeatech the historie of his conuersion for this cause, not only that he may remoue from himselfe all suspition of lightnesse: but that hee may testifie that God had called him, and that he was euen enforced by a commaundement coming from heauen. For seeing that he was, contrary to his expectation, sodainly made a sheepe of a wolfe, such a violent change is of no small importance to purchase credite to his doctrine.

Therefore he amplifieth that his heat and vehement desire which he had to punish the members of Christe, and also that stubbornnesse whercunto he was wholly giuen ouer. If hee had beene nousted vppe in the faith of Christe from his youth, or if hee had been taught by some man, hee should haue imbraced it willingly and without resistance, hee himselfe should haue been sure of his calling, but it should not haue been so well known to others. But now seeing that beeing inflamed with obstinate and immoderate furie, beeing moued with no occasion, neither perswaded by mortall man, hee chaungeth his mynde: it appeareth that hee was tamed and brought vnder by the hande of God.

Therefore this contrarietie is of great waight, in that hee saith that hee was so puffed vp with pride that he thought hee should get the victorie of Christ: whereby hee teacheth that he was nothing lesse, then made a disciple of Christe through his own industry. The name of Iesus of Nazareth is taken in this place for the whole profession of the Gospel, which Paul sought to extinguish, by making war ignorantly against God, as we may see.

10 Which thing I did. Hee proueth by his very factes with what force of zeale hee was carryed away to strue against Christ, vntill greater force did pull him backe, and made him goe the quite contrary way. Furthermore his aduersaries were witnesses of this his vehemencie: so that it was most certaine that he was sodainly chaunged: and vndoubtedly the priestes would neuer haue put him in any such office, vnlesse he had behaued himselfe couragiously in exercising crueltie: and it was meete that hee should be very couragious who should satisfie their furie. This is also to be noted, that Paul was not ashamed to confesse how sore he had offended against God, so that that might turne to the glory of Christe. It was to him vndoubtedly reprochfull, to haue beene carried away with blinde zeal, so that hee enforced those to blaspheme which did desire to serue God: to haue troubled the good and simple diuerty: to haue giuen sentence of the shedding of innocent blood: finally to haue lifted vp his hornes euen vnto heauen, vntill hee was thrown downe. But he doth not spare his own estimation, but doth willingly vnder his owne shame, that the mercy of God may the more plainly appeare thereby.

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Wherefore there could no sinister suspicion rest in his speech; seeing that (without hauing any respect of himselfe) he saith, that he did vterly offend in those thinges whereby he gare the prayse of all the people. Therefore hee condemneth his verie zeale of madnesse, which others did honour. Whereby it appeareth how filthie the ambition of those men is, who are ashamed simply to confesse if they haue offended thorough ignorance or error. For although they doe not altogether excuse the same, yet they goe about to lessen or paint these thinges, for which they ought humbly with sorrow and teares to craue pardon. But though Paul might haue retained the fame of a couragious man, yet hee confesseth that he was a mad man. For the participle which Luke vseth importeth thus muche, that he compelled many to blaspheme. By this wee know that there was great corruption euen in the very first frutes of belecuers, seeing that hauing first professed themselves to bee disciples of Christe, and being afterwarde discouraged with feare or stripes, they did not onely denie him, but also spake euill of his blessed name. Though the very deniall it selfe containeth an horrible blasphemie.

13. *At midday, O king.* The narration tendeth to this end, that king Agrippa may vnderstand that it was no vaine vision or ghost, neyther was it any such traunce as brought him into some madnesse, so that hee was destitute of iudgement. For though he fell to the earth for feare, yet he heareth a plaine voice; he asketh who it was that spake; hee vnderstandeth the answer which was made: which are signes that he was not beside himselfe. Hereupon it followeth that hee did not rashly chaunge his minde, but did godly and holily obey the heavenly oracle: least he should offset purpose proceed to strue against God.

16 *Burise.* Christ did throw downe Paul that hee might humble him: now he lifteth him vp, and biddeth him be of good courage. And euen we are dayly thrown down by his voyce to this end, that we may be taught to be modest: but looke whom he throweth downe, he dorth raise the same againe gently. And this is no small consolation, when Christe saith that he appeared to him not as a reuenger to plague him for his madnesse, for those stripes which he had vniustly and cruelly giuen, for his bloodie sentences, or for that trouble wherewith hee had troubled the Saints, for his wicked resisting of the Gospell: but as a mercifull Lorde, intending to vse his industrie, and to call hym to an honourable ministrie. For hee made him a witnesse of those thinges, which he sawe and which he should afterwarde see. This vision was worthe to be recorded, by whiche hee learned that Christe reigneth in heauen, that he might no longer proudly contemne him: but acknowledge that he is the sonne of God, and the promised redeemer, he had other revelations afterward, as he saith in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, and twelfth chapter.

17 *Delivering thee.* Hee is armed in this place against all feare, which was prepared for him: and also hee is prepared to beare the crosse. Notwithstanding seeing hee addeth immediately that Paule should

shoulde come to lighten the blinde, to reconciled those to God which were estranged from him, and to restore saluation to those which were lost: it is a maruell why he doth not also promise, that they shall on the other side receiue him ioyfully, who shall by meanes of him receiue such and so great benefites. But the vnthankfulnesse of the worlde is noted out vnto vs in this place: because the ministers of eternall saluation are farre otherwise rewarded, as frantike men doe raile vpon their phisitons. And Paul is admonished that whither soener he shall come, a great part of those to whom he shall studie to do good, shall hate him, & seek his ouerthrow. And he saith plainely that hee is appointed to bee a witness both to Iewes & Gentiles, least that turne to his reproch, because he made the Gospell common to both alike. For the Iewes had conceiued suche deadlie hatred against him for this cause, because it greued them that the Gentiles should bee made their fellowes. And though they made a shew that this did proceed of zeale, because they would not haue the couenant which God made with the posteritie of Abraham profaned, by beeing translated vnto straungers: yet meere ambition did pricke them forward, because they alone would bee excellent, al other being vnderlings. But in the person of one man, all godlie teachers are encouraged to do their dutie, that they be not hindred or kept back with the malice of men from offering the grace of God vnto miserable men though they be vnworthie.

18. *That thou maiest open their eyes.* Paul in taking to himselfe that which is proper to God, doeth seeme to exalt himselfe too high. For we know that it is the holy Ghost alone which doth lighten the eyes. We know that Christ is the only redeemer which doth deliuer vs from the tyrannie of Satan. We know that it is God alone who hauing put away our sinnes, doth adopt vs vnto the inheritance of the Saints. But this is a comon thing, that God doth translate vnto his ministers that honor which is due to himselfe alone, not that hee may take any thing from himselfe, but that hee may commend that mightie working of his spirite which he doth shew forth in them. For he doth not send them to worke, that they may bee dead instruments, or as it were stage players: but that hee may worke mightily by their hande. But it dependeth vpon the secrete power of his Spirite that their preaching is effectuall, who worketh all thinges in all men, and which onelie giueth the encrease.

Therefore teachers are sent, not to vtter their wordes in vaine in the ayre, or to beate the eares only with a vaine sounde, but to bring liuely light to the blinde, to fashion again mens hearts vnto the righteousness of God, and to ratifie the grace of saluation which is gotten by the death of Christe. But they doe none of all these, saue onelie in as much as God worketh by them, that their labour may not bee in vaine, that all the prayse may bee his, as the effect commeth from him.

And therefore we must note, that so often as the scripture doth extoll

roll the externall ministerie so honourably, we must not separate it from the Spirit, which quickneth the same euē as the soule doth the body. For it teacheth in other places how little mans industrie can doe of it selfe. For they must plant and water: but it is God alone which giueth the encrease. But because many are hindered by their owne ignorance & malice, that they cannot reape such frute of the Gospel as they ought, wee must note this description, which setteth before our eyes briefly & plentifully, that incomparable treasure. Therefore this is the drift of the Gospel, that beeing deliuered from blindness of minde, wee may be made partakers of the heauenly light: that beeing deliuered from the thralldome of Satan, we may be turned to God: that hauing free forgiveness of sinnes, wee may be made partakers of the inheritance among the Saints. Those which will rightly profite in the Gospel must direct al their senses to this end: for what good shal the continuall preaching thereof doe vs, if we know not the true vse thereof? Also the way and meanes to attaine to saluation is described to vs, All men boast that they be desirous of saluation: but few consider how God will saue them.

Therefore this place wherein the means is prettily cōprehended, is as it were a key to open the gate of heauen. Furthermore wee must knowe, that all mankind is naturally deprived of those good thinges, whiche Christ saith we haue by beleeuing his Gospell. So that it followeth that al are blind, because they be lightned by faith, that al are the bōdslaues of Satā, because they are set free by faith frō his tyrānie: that all are the enemies of God and subiect to eternall death, because they receiue remission of sinnes by faith. So that nothing is more miserable then we if we be without Christ and without his faith. Whereby it appeareth how little, yea that nothing is left for the free will of mens merites. As touching euery part, this lightening is referred vnto the knowledge of God, because all our quicknesse of sight is mæcre vanitie and thicke darkenesse, vntill bee appeare vnto vs by his truth. That reacheth farther which followeth afterwarde: To bee turned from darknesse to light. For that is, when wee are renewed in the spirit of oure minde.

Therefore in my iudgement this member and that which followeth expresse both one thing: to bee turned from the power of Satan vnto God. For that renewing which Paul declareth more largely in the second chapter to the Ephesians, is expressed in diuers formes of speech.

Ephes. 2. 10. Remission of sins followeth next, wherby God doth freely reconcile vs to himselfe, so that we need not doubt but that god wil be fauourable & mercifull to vs. At length the furnishing and filling of all thinges is put in the last place: to wit, the inheritance of eternall life. Some doe reade it falsly in one text, Among those who are sanctified by faith: because this woord is extended vnto the whole period. Therefore the meaning thereof is, that by faith wee come vnto the possession of all those good thinges which are offered by the gospell. And faith is properly directed

directed vnto Christ: because all the parts of our saluation are included in him. Neither doth the Gospel commaund vs to seeke the same any where els saue only in him.

19 Wherecupp, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heauenly vision.

20 But I preached first to those which are at Damascus, and at Ierusalem, and through every region of Iudea: and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and bee turned vnto God, doing woorkes which become those which repent.

21 For this cause the Iewes hauing caught mee in the temple, went about to kill mee.

22 Therefore seeing I haue obtained helpe of God, I stande vntill this present day, testifying both to small and great, saying none other things then those which the prophets and Moses said should come to passe.

23 Whether Christ should suffer, whether he should be the first that should rise from the dead, to shew light to the people and to the Gentiles.

19 Hee declareth now briefly to what ende he rehearsed the historie of his conuersion: to wit, that Agrippa & the rest might vnderstand; that hee had God for his authour of all those thinges which the Iewes condemned of Sacrilege and apostacie. Hee speaketh to Agrippa by name, because he knew that Festus and the Romanes knew not what an heauenly vision meant. Now it appeareth that there is nothing in the very summe of his doctrine which dissenteth from the law and the prophētes. Whereby the oracle doth winne greater credite, whereby Paul was commanded to teach nothing but that which was agreeable to the scripture. Conuersion or turning vnto God is ioyned with repentance not as some peculiar thing: but that we may know what it is to repent. Like as also on the contrary the corruption of men and their frowardnesse is nothing els but an estranging fro God. And because repentance is an inward thing and placed in the affection of the heart, Paul requirereth in the second place, such works as may make the same knowne: according to that exhortation of Iohn the baptist: Bring forth fruites meete for repentance. Now forasmuch as the gospell calleth all those which are Christes vnto repentance, it followeth that all men are naturally corrupt, and that they haue neede to bee chaunged. In like sort this place teacheth that these men do vnskillfully peruert the gospell, which separate the grace of Christ from repentance.

Mat. 3. 8.

21 They went about to kill mee. Hee complaineth in this place of the iniquitie of his aduersaries, that it may thereby appeare that their cause and conscience were both euill. For if Paul had offended they might haue gone to lawe with hym: and euen there shoulde they haue stande in better state, seeing they did farre passe him both in fauour and authoritie. Therefore their madnesse doeth testifie that they are destitute of reason. Whereas Paule saith that hee was saued by the helpe of God, it maketh for the confirmation of his doctrine.

For how is it that he reacheth out his hand to help him, saue onely because he acknowledgeth his minister, and because hee will defende the cause which hee alloweth? Moreouer, this ought to haue encouraged him to goe forward so much the more boldly in his office, in that hee was thus holpen by God. For it had been a point of an vnthankfull man to withdraw himselfe fro him which had holpen him. By which example we be taught that so often as we be deliuered from danger, the Lord doeth not therefore prolong our dayes, that wee may afterwarde liue idly: but that we may doe our dutie cheerefully, and bee readie to die euery houre to his glory, who hath reserved vs to himselfe. And yet Paul did not forget howe much hee was indebted to the chiefe capitaine, but in this place hee commendeth the helpe of God, that hee may shewe that it became him to spende all the rest of his course in his seruice, by whome hee was deliuered: though that came to passe, and were doone through the industrie and by the hande of man.

Testifying both to small and great. Wee haue saide elsewhere that it is more to testifie than to teach: as if there were some solemne contestation made betweene God and men, that the Gospel may haue his maiestie. And he saith that hee is a witnesse both to great and small, that king Agrippa may perceiue that this doth appertaine euen to him: and that when the Gospell is offered euen to euery simple man, that doeth no whit hinder but that it may ascend euen vnto the throne of Princes. For Christ doth gather al me into his bosom with one & the same embracing, that those who lay before in the dung hill and are now extolled vnto so great honour, may reioyce in his free goodnesse, and that those who are placed in high degree of honour, may willingly humble themselves, and not grudge to haue some of the base and contemptible multitude for their brethren, that they may bee made the children of God. So in the first chapter to the Romanes, Hee saith that he is indebted both to the fooles and to the wise, least the Romanes should bee kept backe with the confidence which they might repose in their wisdom, from submitting themselves to his doctrine. By this let vs learne that it is not in the teachers wil to make choyse of his hearers, and that they doe no lesse doe iniurie to God then defraude men of their right, whosoever they be which restraints their labour vnto great men, whom God doth ioyne with those which are small. It were too cold to restrain this vnto ages. Wherefore I doe not doubt but that Paul taketh away the exception which vseth to bee between the noble and vnnoble, because he was neither afraide of the dignitie of the one, neither did he loath the basenesse of the other, but did shew himself a faithfull teacher to both alike.

Saying no other thing. First, this is woorth the noting, that Paul to the ende hee may bring in fit and substantiall witnesses of his doctrine, doeth not take the same from among men, but hee citeth Moses and the Prophetes; to whome the Lorde had graunted vndoubted authoritie. And surely this is one principle to bee obserued, when

when we wil teach soundly, to vtter nothing but that which did proceed out of the mouth of God. Secondly this is worth the noting, that these were the principall pointes of the disputation, which Luke doeth nowe touch: that This was the proper office of Christ, by his death to make satisfaction for the sinnes of the worlde, by his resurrection to purchase righteousnesse and life for men: and that the fruite of his death and resurrection is common both to Iewes and Gentiles. But forasmuch as there is no manifest, and (as they say) literall testimonie extant in the Lawe concerning the death and resurrection of Christ: vndoubtedly they had some doctrin deliuered by hand from the Fathers, out of which they did learne to referre all figures vnto Christ. And as the Prophets, which did propheticie more plainly of Christ, had their doctrin from that fountaine: so they made the men of their time beleue, that they deliuered vnto them no new thing, or which did dissent from Moses. And now Paul did either not finish his apologie, or else he gathered more euident testimonies of all those things, wherein he professed Moses and the Prophets to be his authours.

The first of those which. There were some other whose resurrection went before Christs in time: namely if we admit that the saints of whom the Euangelists speake, did come out of their graues before Christ: which may likewise be said of the taking vp of Enoch & Elias. But he calleth him in this place the First, as in another place the first fruits of those which rise again. Therefore this word doth rather note out the cause, than the order of time: because whē Christ did rise again, he became the conqueror of death & Lord of life, that he might reigne for euer, & make those who are his, partakers of blessed immortalitie. Vnder this word light, he comprehendeth whatsoeuer doeth pertaine vnto perfit felicitie, as by darknesse is meant death and all manner of miserie. And I do not doubt but that Paul alluded vnto the sayings of the Prophetes, The people which walked in darknesse sawe great light. And againe, Behold darknesse shall couer the earth, and a myst the people: but the Lord shall be seene vpon thee. Againe, Behold those which are in darknesse shall see light. Againe, I haue made thee a light of the Gentiles. And it appeareth by many oracles that the light of life should come out of Iudaea and should be spread abroad among the Gentiles.

Mat. 27. 57.
Gen. 5. 24.
2. King. 2. 11
1. Cor. 15.

23.

Esaï. 5. 2.
Ibid. 60. 2.

Ibid. 42. 16.
& 6. & 49. 6.

24 And as Paul answered for himselfe, Festus saith with a lowd voice, Paule thou art beside thy selfe, much learning doth make thee madde.

25 And Paul said I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speake forth the words of truth and sobrietie.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom I also speake freely. For I thinke that none of these thinges are hidden from him: for this was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa beleuest thou the Prophetes? I know that thou beleuest.

28 And Agrippa said vnto Paul, Thou briefly perswadest me to become a Christian.

29 And Paul saith, would to God that not onely thou, but also all which heare

mee this day were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken the king arose, and the Gouverneur, and Bernice, and those which sate with them.

31 And when they were gone apart, they talked together betweene themselves, saying, This man doth nothing worthie of death or bonds.

32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, This man might haue bin loosed, if hee had not appealed vnto Cesar.

24 Festus said with a lowd voice. This outcrie which Festus doth make, doth shewe how much the truth of God preuaileth with the reprobate: to wit, though it bee neuer so plaine and euident, yet is it troden vnder foote by their pride. For though those things which Paul had alleaged out of the Lawe and Prophetes, had nothing in them which was any thing like to madnesse, but were grounded in good reason, yet he doth attribute the same to madnesse: not because hee seeth any absurditie, but because hee refuseth those things which hee doeth not vnderstande. Nothing was more foolish or more vsauourie than the superstitions of the Gentiles, so that their high Priestes were for good causes ashamed to vtter their mysteries, whose follie was more than ridiculous.

a. Cor. 4.3. Festus doeth graunt that there was learning packed in Pauls speech, neuertheless because the Gospell is hidden from the vnbeleeuers, whose mindes Sarhan hath blinded, hee thinketh that hee is a brainsicke fellowe which handleth matters intricatie. So that though hee cannot mocke and openly contemne him, yet hee is so farre from being moued or inwardly touched, that hee counteth him a man which is frensie, and of madde curiositie. And this is the cause that he cannot away to marke what hee saith, least hee make him madde also. As manie at this day flie from the worde of God, least they drowne themselves in a Labarinth: and they thinke that we be madde, because wee moue questions concerning hidden matters, and so become troublesome both to our selues and also to others. Wherefore being admonished by this example, let vs begge of God, that hee will shewe vs the light of his doctrine, and that he will therewithall giue vs a taste thereof, least through obscuritie and hardnesse it become vsauourie, and at length proude loathsomnesse breake out into blasphemie.

25 I am not madde. Paul is not angrie neither doeth hee sharply reprehende Festus for his blasphemous speech: yea hee speaketh vnto him with great submission. For it was no place for reprehension, and it became him to pardon the ignorance of the man, seing hee did not set himselfe face to face against God. Also he had respect vnto his person. For though hee were vnworthie of honour, yet was hee in authoritie. And yet for all that hee doeth not therefore giue place to his blas-

blasphemie, but hee defendeth the glorie of the word of God. Whereby wee doe also see, that not caring for himselfe, hee did onelie take thought for his doctrine. For he doeth not vaunt of his wit, hee doeth not labour in defense of his wisdom: but hee is content with this defense alone, that hee teacheth nothing but that which is true and sober.

Furthermore the truth is set against all manner fallacies and fraud: sobrietie against all manner friuolous speculations, and thornie subtilties, which are onely seeds of contention. Paul doeth in deede refute Festus his error: yet wee may gather by this which is the best manner of teaching, to wit, that which is not onely cleane from all fallacies and deceit, but also doth not make the mindes of men drunken with vaine questions, and doth not nourish foolish curiositie, nor an intemperate desire to know more than is meete: but is moderate and good for sound edification.

26 *For the King knoweth of these things.* Hee turneth himselfe vnto Agrippa in whom there was more hope. And first hee saith that hee knewe the hystorie of the thinges: but hee calleth him streightway backe to the Lawe and the Prophetes. For it was to small end for him to knowe the thing which was done, vnlesse hee did knowe that those thinges which had beene spoken before of Christ, were fulfilled in the person of Iesus which was crucified. And whereas Paule doeth not doubt of Agrippa his faith, hee doeth it not so much to praise him, as that hee may put the Scripture out of all question, least hee be enforced to stande vpon the verie principles. Therefore his meaning is that the Scripture is of sufficient credite of it selfe, so that it is not lawfull for a man that is a Iewe to diminish any iot of the authoritie thereof. And yet Paule doeth not flatter him: for though hee did not reuerence the Scripture as became a godly man: yet he had this rudiment from his childhoode, that hee was perswaded that nothing is contained therein besides the Oracles of God. As the common sort of men, though they do not greatly care for the word of God: yet they acknowledge and confesse generally and confusedly that it is the word of God, so that they are letted with some reuerence either to reiect or to despise the same.

28 *And Agrippa saide vnto Paule.* The Apostle preuailed thus farre at least, that hee wronge out of king Agrippa a confession though it were not voluntarie: as those vse to yeelde, who can no longer resist the trueth, or at least to shewe some token of assent. Agrippa his meaning is that hee will not willingly become a Christian, yea that he will not bee one at all: and yet that hee is not able to gaine say, but that he is drawne after a sort against his wil. Wherby it appeareth how great the pride of mans nature is, vntill it bee brought vnder to obey by the Spirit of God. Interpreters expound this *en oligo* diuersly. Valla thought that it ought to be translated thus, Thou dost almost make me a Christian. Erasmus doth translate it, a litle. The old interpreter dealeth more plainly

plainely, in a little. Because translating it word for word, he left it to the readers to iudge at their pleasure. And surely it may fitly be referred vnto the time, as if Agrippa had said, Thou wilt make me a Christian straightway, or in one moment. If any man obiekt that Pauls answere doth not agree thereto, we may quickly answere: For seeing the speech was doubtfull: Paul doth fitly apply that vnto the thing, which was spoken of the time. Therefore seeing Agrippa did meane that he was almost made a Christian in a small time: Paul addeth that he doth desire that as wel he, as his companions might rise from small beginnings, and profite more and more: and yet I doe not mislike that, that *en oligo* doth signifie as much as almost. This answere doth testifie with what zeale to spread abroad the glory of Christ, this holy mans breast was enflamed, when as hee doeth patiently suffer those bounds wherewith the Gouernour had bound him, and doth desire that hee might escape the deadly snares of Satan, & to haue both him & also his partners to be partakers with him of the same grace, being in the meane season content with his troublesome and reprochfull condition. We must note that he doth not wish it simplie: but from God, as it is he which draweth vs vnto his son: because vnlesse he teach vs inwardly by his Spirit, the outward doctrine shall alwayes wax cold.

Gal. 6. 17.

Except these bonds. It is certaine that Paul his bonds were not so hard; ne yet did they cause him such sorrowe, wherein hee did oftentimes reioyce, & which he doth mention for honours sake, as being the badge of his ambassage; but hee hath respect to those to whom hee wisheth faith without trouble or crosse. For those who did not as yet beleue in Christ, were farre from that affection, to be readie to strue for the Gospel. And surely it behooueth all the godly to haue this gentlenesse and meekenesse, that they patiently beare their owne crosse: and that they wish well to others, and studie so much as in them lieth to ease them of all trouble, and that they doe in no case enuie their quietnesse and myrth. This courtesie is farre contrarie to the bitternesse of those, who take comfort in wishing that other men were in their miserie.

sup. 23. II.

31 *They spake together.* In that Paul is acquitted by the iudgement of them all, it turned to the great renowne of the Gospel. And when Festus agreeth to the rest he condemneth himselfe: seeing he had brought Paul into such straites through his vniust dealing, by bringing him in daunger of his life vnder colour of chaunging the place. And though it seemeth that the appeale did hinder the holy man: yet because this was the onely way to escape death, he is content, and doth not seeke to get out of that snare: not onely because the matter was not euen now safe and sound, but because hee was admonished in the vision that hee was also called by God to Rome.

CHAP. XXVII.

1 **A**ND after that it was decreed that we should saile into Italie, they deliuered both Paul and also certaine other prisoners to a Centurion named *Iulius*,

- 1 *Julius, of the bande of Augustus.*
- 2 And we entred into a ship of *Adramythium*, purposing to saile by the coastes of Asia, and we launched forth, hauing *Aristarchus* of Macedonia, a Thessalonian with vs.
- 3 And the next day we arrived at Sidon, & *Julius* did courteously intreat Paul, and suffered him to go to his friends, that they might refresh him.
- 4 And when we were gon thence, we sailed hard by Cyprus, because the windes were contrarie.
- 5 And when we had sailed on the sea which is ouer against Cilicia and Pamphilia, we came to Myra a Citie of Lycia:
- 6 And when the Centurion had found there a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italie, he put vs in it.
- 7 And when we had sailed slowly manie dayes, and were scarce come ouer against Cnidus, because the wind did let vs, we sailed hard by Crete beside Salomone:
- 8 And with much adoe we sailed beyond it, and came to a certaine place, which is called the faire Hauens, neere vnto which was the Citie of Lasea.

10 Luke setteth downe Pauls voyage by sea most of all to this ende, that wee may knowe that hee was brought to Rome wonderfully by the hand of God: and that the glory of God did manie waies appeare excellent in his doings and sayings euen in the very iourney: which did more establish his Apostleship. He is deliuered to be carried with other prisoners: but the Lorde doth afterward put great difference betweene him and the euill doers, who were in bonds as well as he. Yea moreouer, we shall see how the captaine doth lose him and let him be at libertie when the rest lie bound. I know not what bande that was which Luke calleth the band of Augustus, vnlesse peraduenture it be that which was commonly called the Pretors bande, before the monarchie of the Césars. And Luke setteth downe in plaine words that they were put in a ship of Adramittium: because they shoulde saile by the coast of Asia. For Adramittium is a Citie of Eolia. I cannot tell out of what haueu they launched: because they could not saile with a straight course to Sidon, vnlesse the Mappes doe greatly deceiue mee. Wee may well gesse that they were brought thither, either because they coulde finde a shippe nowhere else, or else because they were to take the other prisoners of whom mention is made, out of that region.

And there continued with vs. Luke seemeth so to commend one mans constancie, that he nippeth the rest. For there were moe which did accompany him to Ierusalem: whereof we see two onely which remained with him. But because it may be that the rest were letted with some iust causes, or that Paulo refused to haue them to minister vnto him, I will say nothing either way. Neither is it an vnmeet thing to say that Luke had some especiall reason for which he doth commend this man aboue the rest, albeit he was but one of many. Surely it is likely that hee was a rich man, seeing he was able to beare the charges whereat he was by the space of three yeares, hauing lest his house. For wee heard before that many of the chiefe families in Thessalonica did receiue Christ, & Luke

Sup. 17. 11
Sup. 20. 4.
saith

saith for honours sake that Aristarchus and Secundus came with Paule into Asia. Therefore let it suffice vs to hold that which is certaine and good to be knowne, that there is set before vs an example of holy patience, because Aristarchus is not wearied with any trouble, but doth willingly take part with Paul in his trouble, and after that he had beene in prison with him two yeares, hee doth now crosse the seas, that hee may likewise minister to him at Rome, not without the reprochings of many, besides the losse of his goods at home, and so great charges.

3 He suffered him to goe to. Paule might haue hid himselfe in a large Citie, which ioyned to the sea: but he was bound with the Oracle, that he could not withdraw himselfe from the calling of God. Again because the Centurion had so courteously entertained him, that he suffered him to go to his friends that they might dresse & refresh him, who he might haue left in the stinking shippe, hee ought not ne could he prouide for his owne life with the other mans daunger without filthy trechery. Neither must we in any case suffer those who haue courteously intreated vs to be deceived by their courtesie through our fault. Let the readers see the voyage whereof Luke speaketh out of those which describe places and countries: onely I say thus much, that all that which is said tendeth to this end, that we may know that their sayling was dangerous & tempestuous, after that they were once gone out of the haven of Sidon; vntill they came neere to Melita: & that afterward the mariners did stride long time with contrarie windes, vntill a cruell storme arose, whose end was shipwracke as we shall see,

9 And when much time was spent, and when sailing was now lepardous, because also the time of fasting was now passed: Paul admonished them.

10 Saying to them, Syrs, I see that this voyage will be with hurt and great losse not onely of the burthen and of the ship, but also of our soules.

11 But the Centurion beleued rather the Gouvernor and the master of the ship, then those things which were spoken of Paul.

12 And because the haugen was vnfit to winter in, many tooke counsell to depart thence, if by any meanes they might come to Phenice; and there winter. This is a haugen of Candie, and lieth toward the South west and by west, and North west and by west.

13 And when the South wind blew softly, supposing to obtaine their purpose, when they had laused neerer, they sailed beyond Candie.

14 But not long after there arose ouer against it a stormie wind, which is called Eurochydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not resist the wind, we let her goe and were carried away.

16 And when we were carried into a certaine Ile called Candie, we could scarce get the boats.

17 Which they tooke vp, and vsed helpe, vndergyrding the shippe, and fearing least they shoulde fall into Syries, they strake saile and so were carried.

- 18 And when wee were tossed with an exceeding tempest, on the morrowe they lightened the shippe:
 19 And the thirde day wee cast out with our owne handes the tackling of the shippe.
 20 Furthermore when neither sunne nor starres appeared now many dayes, and no small tempest lay vpon vs, all hope that wee should be sau'd, was then taken away.

9 When sailing was nowe ieopardous. He doth not onely meane that the windes were contrary then, but also that the time of the yeare was not then commodious, which hee expresseth more plainly afterwarde, when he saith that the fast was passed: for I thinke that this worde was added by way of exposition, to note the end of haruest. Neither doe I passe for that, that that solempne time of fasting whereof Luke speaketh, was strauge to the Centurion and the rest of the mariners: for hee noteth out the times of the yeare according to the custome of the Iewes. Furthermore wee neede not doubt but that it was the haruest fast. Though I am not of their minde, who thinke that it was one of the sower fastes which the Iewes did appoint after the carrying away into Babylon. For Luke woulde not haue put downe simplie without adding any distinction, the thirde fast which was in the seueneth moneth; seeing it was not more famous than the rest, being commaunded to bee kept because of the death of Godolia, and because of the destruction of the rest of the people. Againe, I cannot tell whether that custome were retained by the people after their returne. It is more likely that he meaneth the feast of the attonement, wherein the Lord commanded them to humble their soules seuen dayes. And they beganne the tenth day of the seueneth moneth: whereto partly September and partly October doth now agree. Therefore seeing they were nowe entered into October, it is saide not without cause, that sailing was ieopardous at that time. But and if you referre it vnto hunger (as some doe) I doe not see what sense can bee gathered thence: for they had as yet store of wheate in the shippe, so that they needed not to bee hunger sterued. And why shoulde hee say that the time of the voluntarie fast was passed? Moreouer it shall hereafter appeare by the text, that they were therefore exhorted by Paul to stay, because winter was at hand, whose sharpenes vseth to shut vp the seas. For though he were assured that God woulde gouern the ship, yet he would not tempt him rashly by making too great haste.

Leu. 15. 29.

11 But the Centurion. The Centurion is not reprobued because hee harkned rather to the master and gouernour of the shippe than to Paul. For what should he haue done? For though hee did well like Paule his counsell in other matters, yet hee knew that hee was vnskilfull in sayling. Therefore he suffered himselfe to be gouerned by those which were expert, which was a point of a wise and modest man. Yea verie necessitie did almost compel him to doe this: for the hauen was not commodious to Winter in. Neither did the Gouernour giue counsell to commit the

the shippe to the maine sea; but to thrust in into the next hauen, which was almost in view. So that with taking a little paines they might commodiously passe the winter. Luke reciteth this not in vaine: but that we may know that Paul was from the beginning furnished with the sense of the Spirit, so that he did better see what things were profitable than did the masters. We know not whether he were taught by Oracles, or whether he gaue this counsell through secreat inspiration. This is certaine, that it serued afterward to his commendation. Furthermore in that he saith that they sailed beyond the coast of Candie, vntil they were caught and carried away, our friend Beza doth iustly reprove the error of interpreters in this worde *asson*, who make of an aduerbe the name of a Citie.

15 *When the shippe was caught.* Luke saith that, that fell out heere, which vseth to fall out in extreame danger: namely, they suffered themselves to be carried of the winds. Seing they were first gone some space, and the marriners thought that all things sel out as they would haue it, vndoubtedly they did deride Paul his admonition: as rash men vse commonly to wax proud, if fortune fauour them. Being now caught, they are grieuoussly punished for their boldnesse: yea when they drewe neere to an hauen, they were no lesse affraid least they should breake the shippe, then they were before of ouerturning the same. Luke doeth diligentlie note all these things, out of which we may gather, that the storme was so vehement and fierce, and that it continued still at one stay, that they were still in daunger of death: Also he declareth that they did courageously vse all remedies, which might saue them from suffering shipwrack, and that they spared not the marchandize and tackling; whence we gather that they were enforced with a liuely feeling of danger, to do what they were able. And Luke addeth that when they had assaied all things, they despaired of their safetie. And surely the very darknesse of heauen was as it were a graue. Neither need we doubt but that the Lord meane by this meane to commend and make more notable the grace of their deliuerance which insued shortly after. Neuerthelesse hee suffered his seruant to labour with the rest, vntill he thought he should die. For hee did not appeare vnto him by his Angell, before it might seeme that hee was past hope of recouery. Wherefore his bodie was not onely tost amidst many stormes: but his soule was also shaken with violent tentations. Notwithstanding the end doth shew that he stood vpright by faith; so that he did not faint. Luk speaketh nothing of his prayers: but because he himselfe saith afterward that the Angel of God, whom he serued, appeared to him, it is likely that when others did curse both heauen and earth, he made his prayers to God; and so was quiet, and did patientlie carrie the Lords leisure. And whereas he saith that al hope of safety was taken away: it must not bee referred vnto his sense, but onely vnto the meanes which men coulde vse: as if hee should say, that things were so farre out of order, that there was no safetie to be looked for at mens hands.

16 *And when they were thus afflicted, the Angel of God appeared to Paul.* 21 *End*

- 21 But after long abstinence Paul stood in the midst and said, Syrs yee shoulde haue harkened to me, and not haue loosed from Candie, neither haue broughte vpon vs this iniurie and losse.
- 22 And now I exhort you that yee bee of good courage. For there shalbe no losse of any mans life: but onely of the ship.
- 23 For there stode by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I worship.
- 24 And he said to me, Feare not Paul, Thou must be brought before Cesar. And behold God hath giuen thee all those which saile with thee.
- 25 Wherefore be of good courage Syrs. For I beleene God that it shalbe so, as it hath bin sold me.
- 26 But we must fall into a certaine Iland.
- 27 And when the fourteenth night was come, as wee sailed in the Adriaticall sea, about midnight the mariners supposed that some countrie appeared to them.
- 28 And when they had sounded, they found it twentie fadomes, and when they were gone a little farther they sounded againe, and they founde it fiftene fadomes.
- 29 And fearing least they should haue fallen into some rough places, hauing cast foure ancores out of the sterne, they wished for day.
- 30 And when the mariners sought to flie out of the ship, when they had let downe the boat into the sea, vnder a colour as if they would haue cast ancores out of the fore ship.
- 31 Paul said to the Centurion and the soldiars, vnlesse these abide in the ship, you cannot be saued.
- 32 Then the soldiars cut off the ropes of the boate, and they suffered it to fall away.

21 After long abstinence. Though Luke doeth not plainly expresse how the mariners and soldiars behaued themselues, yet he doth plainly distinguish Paul from them, declaring that hee stode in the midst of them, that he might comfort their faint hearts: for no man is fit to exhort but hee who is himselfe an example of constancie and fortitude. Furthermore Paul deferred this exhortation, vntill they were all euen at the last cast. Wee may easily gather out of the common custome of the infidels, that they raged and made much adoe at the first. A moderate and soft voice coulde neuer haue beene heard amongst those cries and tumults. Nowe after they bee wearie with working and howling, they sit stil alin a dampe, and Paul beginneth to speake to them. Therefore it was meete that they should languish like men halfe deade, vntill they were somewhat quiet, and coulde heare a man which would giue them good counsell. Notwithstanding Paul seemeth to deale vnseasonably when as he objecteth to them foolishnesse, because they would not doe after his counsell, when all was well, seeing that they knew that hee was vnexpert in sailing, as hee himselfe also knewe howe vnskillfull and ignorant he was.

But if we consider what an hardmatter it is to bring men vnto soundnesse of minde, this reprehension was verie profitable. Pauls authoritie shoulde haue beene nothing worth, neither shoulde it haue moued them any whit, vnlesse they shoulde knowe this, that it had not gone well with them because they had despised him before. Chiding is in deede cruell and bringeth no comfort: but if it be tempered with some remedie, it is nowe a part of the medicine. So, after that Paule had made the marriners attentiuē, and had taught by the verie euent that they ought to beleeeue him, hee exhorteth them to bee of good courage, and promiseth them safetie. And this is a token of no smal boldnesse, when hee saith that they ought to haue obeyed him. Therefore hee testifieth by these wordes, that hee spake nothing vnaduisedly: but did commaunde them to doe that which God had prescribed. For though wee doe not reede that hee had some especiall reuelation then giuen him: yet hee himselfe knewe that the spirite did secretly gouerne him: so that hee might without feare take vpon him to giue counsell, seeing hee had the Spirite of God to be his guide. Whereby that doeth better appeare which I touched of late, that Paul in speaking thus doeth awake the marriners, that they may more attentively heare what hee will say. Otherwise it had beene a ridiculous thing for a man which was in daunger of drowning, to promise safetie to those who were partakers with him in like calamitie.

23 *For these stood by mee.* Least hee might bee accused of rashnesse, for promising so fully that they shoulde bee all safe, hee bringeth in God for his authour and witnesse. Neither is it to be doubted but that hee was fullie perswaded that it was a true vision, so that hee did not feare Sathans iuglings. For because that father of lies doeth oftentimes deceiue men vnder a colour of reuelations, God did neuer appeare to his seruantes, either by himselfe or by his Angels, but hee put them out of doubt by shewing them some plaine and euident tokens: and secondly did furnish them with the Spirit of discretion that they might not bee deceiued. But Paule doeth extoll the name of his God in plaine wordes among prophane men: not onely that they may learne that the true God is worshipped in Iudea; but also that Paul himselfe doth worship him. They all knew why hee was put in prison. Now seeing Angels come downe vnto him from heauen, they may easily gather that his cause is approved of God. Therefore there is in these wordes a secret commendation of the Gospell. Neuertheless wee see how Paul triumpheth in his bonds, when hee is the minister of safetie to so manie men, and the interpreter of God.

24 *Feare not Paule.* Hee is verie desirous to bring to passe that they may giue God alone the praise for their deliuerance: least these superstitious men doe falsely translate it vnto their idols: and by this meanes hee inuiceth them vnto the true faith. But by this it appeareth howe great the mens wickednesse is, in that they shut their eares against sounde and wholesome counsell, and doe forthwith forgette the grace

grace of God though it were familiarly knowne to them. Yea (that which worse is) they doe not see nor perceiue it when it is present before their eyes. But howsoeuer the more parte was vnthankfull: yet this Oracle was not reuealed without fruite: yea this was good, that those might bee made without excuse, who did flatter themselves too much in their decepte. And seeing it was saide that hee must bee presented before Cesar, it tended to this ende, that his confession might the more strengthen the godlie, when as they shoulde knowe that hee came forth from God as a witnessse to confirme and auouch the doctrine of the Gospel, and that hee was appointed and saued to that end.

Haue given thee all the soules. Luke seemeth to giue vs to vnderstande by these wordes, that Paule prayed not onlie for himselfe, but also for the rest, that God would saue them all from drowning. And surely it is likelie that seeing hee sawe the daunger common to them all, hee was not so carefull for his owne life, that hee cared not for the rest, whom hee sawe in like daunger. Notwithstanding it may bee that the Lorde did of his owne accorde preuent his prayers. Neither is it any newe thing, that his blessing shoulde reach euen vnto the vnworthie, who are ioyned to the faithfull with any societie. So hee would haue saued Sodome if there had bene tenne good men founde there. Heere ariseth a question, howe farre the integritie of the saints doth profite the wicked.

First wee must remoue the superstition of the Papistes, who when they heare that God is good to the badde for the goods sake, dreame that they bee mediators, who obtaine saluation for the worlde through their merites. And they bee twise fooles in that, that they applie these titles of the lyuing vnto the deade: and thinke that God will bee fauourable to them for no other cause, saue onlie because he beholdeth them, and therefore they make them their patrons. I omit that, that by extolling mens merites they darken the free goodnesse of God. Nowe that wee may aunswere the question propounded, wee must briefly note this: that for as much as the good are mixed with the badde, as well prosperitie as aduersitie doeth happen as well to the one as to the other: and yet it falleth out sometimes that when the Lorde doeth spare his, he beareth also with the wicked for a time together with them. Againe that there bee manie causes, for which God doeth good to the wicked and reprobate for the faithfuls sake. Hee blessed the house of Putiphar for Iosephs sake, that hee might moue him to handle this holy man gentlie. Hee declared his good will towarde Paule in sauing manie men, that he might beare witnessse of his godlinesse, that the maiestie of the Gospell might thereby appeare more plainely. But we must note this, that whatsoeuer benefits God bestoweth vppon the wicked, they turne at length to their destruction: as on the other side punishments are profitable for the godlie, which they suffer together with the reprobate.

Gen. 39.5.

In the meane season this is a singular pledge of Gods loue toward vs, in that he maketh certaine dropes of his goodnesse distil from vs vnto others.

25 *For I beleue God.* Paul telleth them againe, whence hee had such boldnes, that he affirmeth that though they be amidst infinite gulfes of the sea, yet shall they all come safe to the hauen: namely, because God had promised it shuld be so: in which words the nature of faith is expressed, when there is a mutuall relation made betweene it and the worde of God, that it may strengthen mens minds against the assaults of temptations. And he doth not only exhort the mariners by his own example to beleue: but doth as it were take vpon him the office of a promiser, that he may winne credite to the Oracle. That which followeth immediately touching the Ile, is a latter signe: whereby it may more plainly appeare after the ende of the matter, that this their sailing was not vncertaine: otherwise it had bin to no end for the mariners to know how they should escape. Therefore we see how God doth giue that safetie which he promised, a marke, that it may not seeme to come by chance. Notwithstanding wee must note that God kept them still in some doubt: partly that he may exercise the faith of his seruant, partly that they may all knowe that Paul learned that of the holy Ghost, which hee could not as yet comprehend by mans reason. Notwithstanding Luke teacheth in the text it selfe, that he was not beleueed for al this. For seeing the mariners thought that there began some countrie to appeare vnto them, it did not agree with the promise made touching their arriuing in an Ile. Therefore wee see howe that they were scarce enforced euen by experience, to thinke that he spake the truth.

30 *And as the mariners sought.* The grace of the holie spirit appeareth in Paul euen in this point also, in that he did wisely admonish that the mariners shoulde not bee suffered to flie. For why doeth not rather the Centurion or some other of the companie smell out their fraude, saue onely that Paul may be the minister of their deliuerance euen vnto the end? But it is a maruel that he saith that the rest could not be saued vnllesse the mariners shoulde remaine in the shippe. As if it were in their power to make the promise of God of none effect. I aunswere that Paul doeth not dispute in this place precisely of the power of God, that hee may seperate the same from his will and from meanes: and surely God doth not therefore commend his power to the faithfull, that they may giue themselves to sluggishnesse and carelesnesse, contemning meanes, or rashly cast away themselves when there is some certaine way to escape. God did promise Ezechias that the citie shoulde be deliuered. If he had set open the gates to the enimie: would not Iesaias straightway haue cried, thou destroyest both thy selfe and the Cittie? And yet for
 35 all this it doeth not followe, that the hande of God is tied to meanes or helpes: but when God appointeth this or that meanes to bring anie thing to passe, hee holdeth all mans senses, that they may not passe the bounds which he hath appointed.

- 33 And when the day began to appeare, Paule exhorted them all to take meate: saying, this is the fourteenth day, that yee haue tarried and continued fasting, receiving nothing at all.
- 34 Wherefore I exhort you to take meate: for this no doubt is for your health: because there shall not one haire fall from the head of any of you.
- 35 And when hee had thus spoken, heeooke bread, and gave thanks to God, in the sight of them all: and when hee had broken it, he began to eat.
- 36 Then were they all refreshed in their mindes, and they alsoooke meate.
- 37 And at the soules which were in the shippe were two hundred threescore and sixteene.
- 38 And when they had eaten enough, they did lighten the ship, casting out the wheat into the sea.
- 39 And when it was day, they knewe not the lande: but they spied a certaine haven hauing a banke, into the which they minded to thrust the shippe.
- 40 And when they had taken vp the anchors, they committed themselves to the sea: also having loosed the mulder bands, and hexed vp the maine saile to the wind, they drew toward the shoare.
- 41 But when they were fallen into a place where two seas met, they brist in the ship, and the fore part did sticke fast, and moved not: but the hinder part brake through the violence of the wauer.
- 42 Furthermore the soldiars counsell was to kill the prisoners, least any after he had swomme out, should escape.
- 43 But the Centurion being desirous to saue Paul, kept them from their purpose: and commaunded that those which could swimme, should cast themselves first into the sea and should escape to land.
- 44 And the other some on boards, and some on broken peeces of the ship, and so it came to passe that they all escaped safe to land.
- 33 And when the day began. What soeuer the mariners thinke, Paule his faith doth not equale: but he loaneth stedfastly to the promise which was made to him. For he doth not onely exhort them to take meate, as did he who in extreme dispaire, vttered these words, Dine soldiars wee shall suppe in Hell: but continuing stedfast in his prophecie, he willetch them to be of good courage. The force of faith doth therein shew itself, when as it armeth vs vnto patience, and doeth valiantly beare off and beate backe those assaultes wherewith Sathan goeth about to shake it. But whereas he saith that they continued fasting for the space of fourteene dayes, it may seeme absurde and false: [There may some one man bee founde, which can abide to fast long: but it is scarce credible of so great a multitude. We may easily answer, that Their vnwonted abstinence from meate is vnproperly called fasting: because they had neuer filled their bellie during all that time: because those who are in sorrowe and heavinesse doe almost loath meate. And because dispaire was the cause of this, their loathing of meate, he affirmeth againe that they shall live, so they bee of good courage. For a faithfull minister of the word must not onely bring abroad the promises: but also counsell men to followe God whither soeuer hee calleth them: and that they bee not

stothfull and sluggish. Furthermore the meaning of the wordes is this; God hath determined to saue you, this confidence ought to animate you, and to make you meric, that you bee not negligent in your owne businesse.

35 *He tooke bread.* That hee may the better encourage them by his owne example, hee taketh breade and eateth. Luke saith that hee gaue thanks, not onely according to his daily custome, but because that seru-ed greatly to testifie his boldnesse and good confidence. It is not to be doubted but that Paul himselfe did that when he tooke meate, which he commaundeth other men: but now hee doeth not onely testifie his thankfulnesse, neither doth he onely desire of God that he will sanctifie the meate which he is about to eat: but he calleth vpon God without feare who is the authour of his life; that those poore wretches which were drenched in sorrow might conceiue some good hope. And he pre-uailed thus farre at least; that they gathered so much courage to them as to take meate: who had through feare forgotten to care for their life.

37 *All the foules.* The number of the men is recited first, that it may more plainly appeare that none of the multitude did perish. For Luke doth not shew how many men did swimme to the shoare, but how many were then in the shippe. Secondly that the miracle may bee made more euident and also famous: for in mans iudgement it is a thing vnpossible that two hundred threescore and sixteene men should scape to land ha-ving suffered shipwracke, without losse of any mans life. For it is likelic that fewe had any skill in swimming, except the mariners. And though they were somewhat refreshed with the meate which they had eaten: yet they were brought so lowe with sorrowe and wearisomnesse, that it is a maruel that they were so nimble as that they coule moue their armes. And now we must consider what a stirre they kept: whereas it is sel-dome seene that twentie or thirty men do so swimme in danger, but one of them doeth hinder or drowne another. Therefore God did plainlie stretch forth his hand out of heauen, seing all those came to shoare safe and sound, which had cast themselues into the sea.

38 *And when they had eaten inough.* This circumstance doth shew that they were at length moued with Pauls words. It was not yet light, that they coule knowe whether there were any haven neere. And yet they cast out into the sea the wheat which remained, that they might lighten the shippe. They would not haue done this vnlesse Paul his autho-ritie had preuailed more with them now than before. But as all vnbe-leeuers are vnstable, that perswasion did quickly vanish out of their minds.

41 *They thrust in the shippe.* And then it might seeme that both God had mocked Paul, and that he with trifling had brought his partners in a vaine hope, but God did forthwith put away that error by giuing them prosperous successe? It was meet that when the ship was broken, they should be so discouraged, and that their soules should so melt, that despaire might increase the glorie of the miracle. For God vseth to mo-
derate

derate and gouerne his works so, that he maketh some shew of difficultie, by reason of many lets which fall out. By this meanes he sharpneth our senses vnto greater attentiuensse, that we may at length learn that though all the worlde strue against him, yet will hee haue the victorie. This is the reason why he had leister draw Paul and his companions to the shore after that the shippe was lost, than bring the shippe whole to land.

42 *The counsell of the soldiars.* This was too horrible vnthankfulnesse. Though the soldiars might thanke Paule twice or thrise for their liues, yet are they minded to kill him, for whose sake they ought to haue spared the rest. Hee had saued them euen as an Angel of God: hee had giuen them wholsome counsell: hee had refreshed them in the same day when they were past hope: and nowe they sticke not to seeke to destroy him, by whom they were so often and so many wayes deliuered. Wherefore if it so fall out that we bee ill rewarded for our good deeds, there is no cause why the vnthankfulnesse of men shoulde trouble vs, which is a disease too common. But they are not onely vnthankfull to Paule who was the minister of their life, but also their filthy misbeliefe and forgetfulness of the goodnesse of God doth bewray it selfe. They had of late receiued that oracle, that their soules were giuen to Paul: and now seeing they will be saued after he is dead, what other thing goe they about but to resist God, that they may saue themselues from death contrarie to his will? Therefore they haue now forgotten that grace whereof they tasted against their will in extreme dispaire: neither doth it tast any longer, after that they see the haue nigh at hand. But it behooueth vs to consider the wonderfull counsell of God as well in sauing Paul as in fulfilling his promise: when as he bringeth those men to land, who did what they could to make his promise of none effect. Thus doth his goodnesse oftentimes strue with the wickednesse of men. Yet hee doeth so pittie the wicked, that deferring their punishment vntill so fit opportunitie, he doth not quite discharge them: yea the longer he tarrith the more grievously he punisheth, & so by that meanes he maketh amends for his long tarrying.

CHAP. XXVIII.

- 1 **A**ND when they were escaped they knewe that the Ile was called Melite:
- 2 And the Barbarians shewed vs no little kindnesse: for they kindled a fire and receiued vs all, because of the present showre, and because of the cold.
- 3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticke, and had laide them on the fire, a vyper came out of the heat, and lept on his hand.
- 4 Nowe when the Barbarians saw the beast hang vpon his hande, they saide among themselves, This man surely is a murderer: whom, though he hath escaped the sea, vengeance doth not suffer to liue.
- 5 But he shooke off the vyper into the fire, and suffered no harme.

6 But they thought that it would come to passe that he would swell and fal down dead sodainly. And as they waited long, and saw no harme come to him, chaunging their mind, they said he was a God.

1 That dolefull spectacle is described in the beginning of the Chapter, when so many men being wet, and also all berayed with the some & filth of the sea, and stiffe with colde, did with much adoe crawl to the shore, for that was all one as if they had bene cast vp by the sea, to die some other death. After that, Luke declareth that they were courteously intertaind of the Barbarians, that they kindled a fire that they might drie their cloathes, and refresh their ioynts which were stiffe with colde, and at length that they were saued from the showre. Therefore in that Paul commendeth these dueties, he sheweth his thankfulness: and so great liberalitie toward strangers is for good causes aduanced, whereof there be rare examples in the world. And though common nature doth wring out of the barbarous Gentiles some affection of mercy in so great necessitie: yet vndoubtedly it was God which caused the me of Melita to handle these men so courteously, that his promise might be sure and certaine, which might seeme vnperfect, if the shipwracke had caused the losse of any mans life.

A Viper coming out of the heat. The very euent did proue that Paule was a true and vndoubted prophet of God. Nowe that God may make him famous as well by land as by sea, hee sealeth the former myracles with a newe myracle: and so hee ratifieth his Apostleshippe among the men of Melita. And though there were not many which did profite thereby: yet the maiestie of the Gospell did shine euen among the vnbeleeuers: also this did greatly confirme the Oracles to the mariners, which they had not sufficiently reuerenced. Neither did the viper come out of the stickes by chance: but the Lorde did direct her by his secret counsell to bite Paul, because he saw it would turne to the glorie of his Gospell.

4 *So soone as the Barbarians saw.* This iudgement was common in all ages, that Those who were grievously punished, had grievously offended. Neither was this perswasion conceiued of nothing: but it came rather from a true feeling of godlinesse. For God, to the ende hee might make the world without excuse, would haue this deeply rooted in the minds of all men, that calamitie and aduersitie, and chiefly notable destruction were testimonies and signes of his wrath, and iust vengeance against sinnes. Therefore so often as wee call to minde any notable calamitie, wee doe also remember that God is sore offended, seeing hee punisheth so sharply. Neither did vngodlinesse euer get the vpper hand so farre, but that all men did still retaine this principle: that God, to the end hee may shewe himselfe to be the iudge of the worlde, doeth notably punish the wicked. But heere crept in an error almost alwaies, because they condemned all those of wickednesse, whom they saw roughly handled. Though God doeth alwayes punish mens sinnes with aduersitie: yet doth he not punish every man according to his

his desertes in this life, and sometimes the punishments of the godlie are not so much punishments as tryals of their faith, and exercises of godlinesse. Therefore those men are deceiued, who make this a generall rule to iudge euery man according to his prosperitie or aduersitie. This was the state of the controuersie between Iob and his friends: they did affirme that that man was a reprobate and hated of God, whome God did punish, and he did alleage on the other side, that the godly are sometimes humbled with the crosse. Wherefore, least we be deceiued in this point, we must beware of two things. The former is, that wee giue not rash & blind iudgement of things vnkown, according to the euent alone: for because God doth punish the good as well as the bad: yea it falleth out oftentimes that he spareth the reprobate, & doth sharplie punish those who are his: if we wil iudge aright, we must begin at another thing then at punishments: to wit, that we enquire after the life & deeds, if any adulterer, if any blasphemous person, if any periured man, or murderer, if any filthie person, if any cosiner, if any bloodie beast be punished: God doth point out his iudgement as it were with his finger. If we see no wickednes, nothing is better then to suspend our iudgement concerning punishment. The other caution is, that we wait for the end. For so soone as God beginneth to strike, we doe not by and by see his drift and purpose: but the vnlike end doth at length declare, that those differ farre before God, who seeme in mens eyes both alike in the likelyhood of punishment. If any man obiekt that it is not in vaine so often repeated in the lawe, that all priuate and publike miseries are the scourges of God: I graunt in deede that that is true: but yet I denie that it doeth keepe God from sparing whom he will for a time, though they be of all men the worst; and from punishing those more sharplie, whose fault is meane. Neuerthelesse it is not our duetic, to make that perpetuall which falleth out oftentimes. Wee see now wherein the men of Melite wer deceiued: to wit, because hauing not scanned Pauls life, they iudge him to be a wicked man, only because the viper doth bite him. Secondly because they stay not the ende, but giue iudgemente rashly. Neuerthelesse we must note that these are detestable monsters, who go about to plucke out of their heartes all feeling of Gods iudgement, which is ingrafted in vs all naturally, and which is also found in the Barbarians, and sauage men. Whereas they think that Paul is rather gilty of murder then of any other offence, they follow this reason, because murder hath alwayes been most detestable.

Vengeance doth not suffer. They gather that he is a wicked man, because vengeance doth persecute him though he haue escaped the Sea. And they felmed that the reuenging Goddesse did sit by the seat of Iupiter which they commonly called *Dice*: grossly, I graunt, as men ignorant of pure religion: and yet not without some tollerable signification, as if they had painted out God to be iudge of the world. But by these words the wrath of God is distinguished from fortune: and so the iudgement of God is mouched against all blind chances. For the men of Melite take

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it to be a signe of the heauenly vengeance, in that though Paul be saued yet can he non be safe.

5 *Shaking off the viper.* The shaking off of the viper is a token of a quiet minde. For we see how greatly feare doth trouble and weaken me: and yet you must not thinke that Paul was altogether void of feare. For faith doth not make vs blockish as brain sick men do imagine, when they be out of danger. But though faith doth not quite take away the feeling of euils, yet it doth temperate the same, least the godly be more afraide then is meet: that they may alwayes be bold and haue a good hope. So though Paul vnderstand that the viper was a noysome beast, yet did he trust, to the promise which was made to him, and did not so feare her plauie biting that it did trouble him: Because hee was euen readie to die if need had been.

7 *Changing their mindes they said.* This so wonderfull and sodaine a chaunge, ought to haue inwardly touched the men of Melita, and to haue moued them to giue the glory to the mercy of god, as they did before to vengeance. But as mans reason is alwayes carried amisse ynto extremities, they make Paul at a sodaine a God, whom they tooke before to be a wicked murtherer. But if he could not chose but be the one, it had been better for him to be counted a murtherer then a God. And surely Paul would rather haue wished to be condemned not only of one crime, but also to haue sustained all shame, and to haue beene thrust downe into the deepe pit of hell, then to take to him selfe the glorie of God: which thing those knewe full well who had hearde him preach amidst the stormes. Norwithstanding it may be that being taught afterwarde, they did confesse that God was the authour of the myracle. Furthermore, let vs learne by this historie with patient and quiet minds to wait for the prosperous euent of things, which seeme at the first to tend toward the robbing of God of his honour. Which of vs would not haue been terrified with this spectacle, which did arme the wicked to slander with all manner of slanderous speeches the glory of the Gospell? Yet we see how God did in good time preuent this inconuenience: therefore let vs not doubt but that after he hath suffered his to bee darkened with cloudes of slaunders, hee will send remedie in his good time, and will turne their darknesse into light. In the meane season let vs remember that we must beware of the iudgement of the flesh. And because men doe alwayes forget themselues, let vs beg of God the spirit of moderation, that he may keepe vs alway in the right meane. Furthermore let vs learne by this how readie the worlde is to fall to superstition. Yea this wickednes is in a maner born with vs, to be desirous to adorn creatures with that which we take from God.

Wherefore no maruell if new errours haue come abroade in all ages, seeing euery one of vs is euen from his mothers wombe, expert in inuenting Idols. But least men excuse themselues therewithall, this historie doeth witnesse, that this is the fountaine of superstitions, because men are vnthankesfull to God, and doe giue his glory to some other.

- 7 And in those places were the possessions of the chief man of the yle, whose name was Publius, who receiued vs and lodged vs courteously.
- 8 And so it was that the father of Publius lay sicke of the feuer and bloodie flux, to whom Paul entred in : and when he had prayed, and had laid his hands vpon him, he healed him.
- 9 Therefore when hee had done thus, the rest also which had infirmities in the yle, came and were healed.
- 10 Who did also giue vs great honor, and when we departed they laded vs with things necessarie.
- 11 And after thre monethes we sailed in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the yle, whose badge was Castor and Pollux.
- 12 And when we came to Syracuse, we staid there three dayes.
- 13 And from thence we set a compasse and came to Rhegium. And after one day when the South winde blew, we came the next day to Puteoli.
- 14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to stay with them seuen daies: & so we came to Rome.

7 And in those places. Because this name Publius is a Romane name I suspect that this man of whom mention is made was rather a citizen of Rome, then borne in the yle. For the Grecians and other strangers were not wont to borrow their names of the latines, vnlesse they were men of small reputation. And it may be that some of the noble men of Rome came then to see his possessions, and is called the chiefe man of the yle: not because he dwelt there, but because no man could compare with him in wealth and possessions. And it is scarce probable that all the whole multitude of Grecians was lodged there three dayes. I do rather thinke that when he entertained the Centurion, he did also honor Paul and his companions, bicause being admonished by the myracle, hee did belecue that he was a man beloued of God. Notwithstanding howsoeuer it bee, his hospitalitie was not vnrewarded. For shortly after the Lord restored his father to health by the hand of Paul, who was indeed sicke of a dangerous disease. And by this meanes he meant to testifie, how greatly that courtesie which is shewed to menne in miserie and to strangers, doth please him. Although those who are holpen be vnmindfull and vnthankfull for that benefite which they haue receiued, or they bee not able to recompence those who haue done good to them: yet god himself wil abundantly restore to men whatsoeuer they haue bestowed at his commandement: & he hath sometimes appointed to those which bee mercifull and giuen to hospitalitie, some of his seruantes which bring with them a blessing. This was now great honour in that Publius did lodge Christ in the person of Paule. Notwithstanding this was added as an ouerplus, in that Paul came furnished with the gifte of healing, that he might not only recompence his courtesie, but also giue more then he had receiued.

Also wee knowe not whether he learned the first principles of faith, as myrales doe for the most parte winne the rude and vnbeleeuers vnto faith, Luke mentioneth the kinde of disease, that hee may the better

ter set forth the grace of God. For seeing it is an harde matter to cure a bloodie fluxe, especially when the ague is ioyned therewith: the olde man was cured thus sodainly only by the laying on of hands and praier, not without the manifest power of God.

8 *And had laid his hands vpon him.* Paul declareth by prayer, that hee himselfe is not the authour of the myracle, but onely the minister, least God be defrauded of his glory. He confirmeth this selfe same thing by the externall signe. For as we saw before in other places, the laying on of hands was nothing els but a solemne rite of offering and presenting. Wherefore in that Paul doth offer the man to God with his owne handes, he professed that he did humbly craue his life of him. By which example not only those who haue excellent giftes of the Spirit giuen them, are admonished to beware least by extolling them selues, they darken the glory of God: but also wee are all taught in generall, that we must so thanke the ministers of the grace of God, that the glory remaine to him alone. It is said in deede that Paule healed the man which had the bloodie fluxe: but it is plainly expressed by the circumstances which are added, that it was God which bestowed this benefite, making him the minister thereof. Whereas Luke saith afterwarde that others which were sicke in the yle were cured, he doth not extend it vnto all: but his meaning is that the power of God which appeared euidently ynough, was proued by many testimonies, that the Apostleship of Paul might be thereby ratified. Neither need we doubt but that Paul sought as well to cure their soules as their bodies. Yet Luke doeth not declare what good he did: saue only that the Barbarians gaue him and his fellowes victuall and necessarie thinges when they loosed from the hauen. In the meane season wee must note, that though Paul myght haue withdrawn himselfe and haue escaped many wayes, yet was the will of God to him in steed of voluntarie fetters: because he was often cited by the heavenly oracle to appeare before the iudgement seate of Nero, to beare witness of Christ. Againe, he knew that if he should run away, he could no longer haue preached the gospel, but shoulde haue lurked in some corner during his whole life.

11 *In a ship of Alexandria.* By these wordes Luke giueth vs to vnderstand that the former shippe was either drowned, or els so rent and beaten that it serued for no vse afterwarde: whereby the greatnesse of the shipwracke doeth, the better appeare. And hee setteth downe expressly that the badge of the ship of Alexandria wherein they were carried to Rome, was Castor and Pollux, that we may know that Paul had not libertie graunted to sayle with such as were like to himselfe: but was enforced to enter into a ship which was dedicated to two Idols. The old Poets did feigne that Castor and Pollux came of Iupiter and Leda: for which cause they are called in Greeke *dioscouroi*: which word Luke vseth in this place: as if you should say, Iupiters sonnes. Againe, they said that they are the signe in the Zodiacke called Gemini. There was also another superstition among the mariners, that those furrish exhalations which appeare in tempests, are the very same. Therefore in times past, they

they were thought to be gods of the seas, and were therefore called vpon as at this day Nicholas and Clement, & such like. Yea as in poperie they retain the old errors changing the names only: so at this day they worship these exhalations vnder the name of Saint Hermes, or Saint Eimus. And because if one exhalation appeare alone, it is a dolefull token: but if two together (as Plinie writeth) then they foreshewe a prosperous course. To the end the mariners of Alexandria might haue both Castor and Pollux to fauour them: they had both for the badge of their ship. Therefore as touching them, the shippe was polluted with wicked sacriledge: but because Paul did not make choise thereof of his owne accord, he is not polluted thereby. And surely seing an Idol is nothing, it cannot infect the creatures of God, but that the faithfull may vse them purely and lawfully. And we must needs thinke thus, that al those blotches wherewith Satan doth goe about to staine the creatures of god through his iuggling, are washed away by no other means but by a good and pure conscience, whereas the wicked and vngodly doe defile those thinges which are of themselues pure, though they do but touch them. Finally, Paul was no more defiled by entring into this ship, then when he did behold the altars at Athens: because being void of al superstition, he knew that all the rites of the Gentiles were mere illusions. Againe, the men could not thinke that he did agree to that profane error. For if hee had bin to doe any worship to Castor and Pollux though it had bin only for fashions shake, hee would rather haue died a thousand deaths, then once haue yielded.

Therefore because he needed not to feare any offence, hee entreth the ship without any more adoe: and vndoubtedly he did this heauilie and with inward sorrow: because he saw the honour which is due to god alone, giuen to vaine intencions. Therefore this ought to be numbred among his exercises, in that he had those to be his guides, who thought that they were gouerned of Idols, and had committed their ship to their tuition.

12 *When we were come to Syracuse.* Luke prosecuteth the residue of the course of their sayling, that they arriued first in Sicilia. And after that they set a compass by reason of the tempest and raging of the sea, and sailed ouer into Italie. And as that haue whereof Luke speaketh in this place, is the most famous liauen of all Sicilia: so is it farther from the coast of Italie then is that of Messana, ouer against which is Rhegium, whereof he maketh mention. And it is in the countrie of the Brutians, as is Puteoli a citie of Campania. But forasmuch as the brethren kept Paul at Puteoli seuen dayes, by this we gather howe fauourably & getly the Centurion hadled Paul. Neither do I doubt but that the holy man would haue made him a faithfull promise that hee would alwayes returne in due time. But he was perswaded of his vprightnesse, so that he was not afraid that he would deceiue him. And now we gather out of this place, that the seede of the gospel was then sowne abroad, seing there was some bodie of the church euen at Puteoli.

15 And when the brethren had heard of vs from thence, they came out to meete vs at Appii Forum, and at the three Taverns, whom when Paul sawe, hee gave thanks to God and waxed bold.

16 And when we were come to Rome, the Centurion deliuered the prisoners to the chiefe captaine of the host. But Paul was suffered to dwell alone with a soldier which kept him.

17 And after three dayes Paul called together the chiefe of the Iewes: and when they were come, he said to them, Men and brethren, though I haue done nothing against the people or ordinances of the Elders, yet was I deliuered a prisoner from Ierusalem into the hands of the Romanes.

18 Which when they had examined me, they would haue let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Iewes spake contrary, I was enforced to appeale to Caesar: not as if I haue any thing to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore haue I sent for you, that I might see you, and speake to you. For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain.

15. When the brethren heard. God did comfort Paul by the coming of the brethren who came forth to meet him, that he might the more ioyfully make hast to defend the Gospel. And the zeale and godly care of the brethren appeareth therein, in that they inquire for Pauls coming, and goe out to meete him. For it was at that time not onely an odious thing to professe the christian faith, but it might also bring them in hazzarde of their life. Neither did a few men only put themselves in priuate daunger: because the enuie redounded to the whole Church. But nothing is more deare to them then their duty wherein they could not bee negligent yncle they woulde bee counted sluggish and vnthankfull. It had bene a cruell fact to neglect so great an Apostle of Iesus Christe, especially seeing hee laboured for the common saluation.

And now forasmuch as he had written to them before, and had of his owne accord offered his seruice to them, it had been an vnseemly thing not to repay to him brotherly good will and curtesie. Therefore the brethren did by this their dutifulnes testifie their godlines toward Christ: & Pauls desire was more inflamed, because he saw frute prepared for his constancie. For though he wer indued with inuincible strength, so that he did not depend vpon mans helpe: yet God who vseth to strengthen his by meanes of men, did minister to him new strength by this means. Though he were afterward forsaken when he was in prison, as he complaineth in a certaine place, yet did he not despair: but did fight no lesse valiantly and manfully vnder Christes banner, than if he had been guarded with a great armie. But the remembraunce of this meeting did serue euen then to encourage him, seeing he did consider with himselfe that there were many godly brethren at Rome, but they were weak, and that he was sent to strengthen them. And there is no cause why wee should maruell that Paul was emboldened at this present when he saw the brethren, because he did hope that the confession of his faith would

would yeeld no small frute. For so often as God sheweth to his seruants any frute of their labour, he doth as it were pricke them forward with a goad, that they may proceed more couragiously in their worke.

16 *The Centurion deliuered the prisoners.* Luke doeth signifie that Paul had more libertie graunted him then the rest: for this condition and estate was peculiar. For he was suffered to dwell in an house by him selfe, haping one keeper with him, where as the rest were shut vp in the common prison. For the generall captaine knewe by Festus his reporte, that Paul was gilllesse: and the Centurion, as it is likely, did faithfully rehearse such things as might serue to bring him into fauour. Notwithstanding let vs know that God did gouerne from heauen the bondes of his seruant: not only that hee might ease him of his trouble, but that the faithfull might haue freer accesse vnto him. For he would not haue the treasure of his faith shut vp in prison, but hee would haue it laid open, that it might enrich many faire and wide. And yet Paule was not so at libertie, but that he did alwayes carry a chaine. Luke calleth the generall captaine *Stratopedarches*, who was appointed ouer the arme which kept the citie, as histories make mention.

17 *And after three dayes.* Paule his humanitie was wonderfull, in that, though he had suffered such cruell iniuries of his nation, he studieth notwithstanding to appease the Iewes which are at Rome, and hee excuseth himselfe to them, least they hate his cause, because they heare that the priestes doe hate him. He might well haue excused himself before men, if he had passed ouer these Iewes and turned him selfe to the Gentiles. For though hee had continually in diuers places assayed to bring them to Christ, yet they were more and more nettled and moued: and yet he had omitted nothing neither in Asia, nor in Grecia, neicher at Ierusalem, which might mitigate their furie. Therefore all men would haue iustly pardoned him, if he had lett those alone, who he had so often tried to be of desperate pride. But because he knew that his master was giuen of his father to be the minister of the Iewes, to fulfil the promises, whereby God had adopted to himselfe the seede of Abraham to be his people: he looketh vnto the calling of God and is neuer wearie. He sawe that he must remaine at Rome: seeing he had libertie graunted to teache, he would not that they should be deprived of the frute of his labor. Secondly he would not haue them moued through hatred of his cause, to trouble the church: because a small occasion might haue caused great destruction. Therefore Paul meant to beware, least according to their wonted madnesse they should set all on fire.

I haue done nothing against the people. These two things might haue made the Iewes hate him: either because hee should haue done hurt to the common wealth of his nation, as some runnagates did increase their bondage which was too cruell, through their treacherie: or because he should haue done somewhat against the worship of God: for though the Iewes wer growen out of kinde, & religion was depraued and corrupted among them with many errors, yet the very name of the laws, and the

the worship of the temple were greatly reuerenced. Furthermore, Paul denieth not but that he did freely omit those ceremonies whereto the Iewes were superstitiously tied: yet he cleereth himselfe of the crime of reuolting whereof he might be suspected. Therefore vnderstande those ordinances of the fathers, whereby the children of Abraham and the disciples of Moses ought according to their faith to haue bene distinguished from the rest of the Gentiles. And surely in that he did cleue so houly to Christe, who is the soule and perfection of the lawe, hee is so farre from impairing the ordinances of the fathers, that none did better obserue the same.

19. *I was enforced to appeale.* This appeale was full of hatred and enuie for this cause, because the authoritie and libertie of the Iewish nation did seeme to be sore oppress, who coulde haue been content to haue liued with their owne lawes. Secondly, because his defence was ioyned with infamie & losse of all the people. Therefore he answereth this objection also: because he was enforced with the stubbornnes of his enemies to flie to this forresse. For he is excused by necessitie, because hee had no other way to escape death. And after that hee had excused that which was done alreadie, he promisetht that he wil so handle his matter hereafter, that he will not labour against the Iewes.

20. *For the hope of Israel.* Wee must vnderstande much more vnder these wordes, then Luke expresieth: as we gather out of the answer, where the Iewes speak of the sect: to wit, repeating his speeche, which Luke omitteht. Therefore Paul entreated of Christ, that it might plainlie appeare that neither the lawe nor the temple did profite the Iewes any thing without him: because the couenaunt of adoption is grounded in him, and the promise of saluation is in him confirmed. Neither did they doubt but that the restoring of the kingdome did depend vpon the comming of the Messias: and euen at that time their miserie and decay did increace the hope and desire of him. Wherefore Paul saierht for good causes that he is bounde for the hope of Israel. Whereby we be also taught that no man doth hope aright, but hee which looketh vnto Christ and his spirituall kingdome: for when he placeth the hope of the godly in Christ, he excludeth all other hopes.

21. *But they said vnto him, wee neither receiued letters from Iudea touching thee, neither did any of the breshren come and shewe vs or speake any euill of thee.*

22. *But we will heare of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning that sect, we know that it is spoken against euery where.*

23. *And when they had appointed him a day, many came to him to his lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdome of God, and perswaded them of Iesum out of the lawe of Moses, and out of the prophetes, from morning till night.*

24. *And certaine beleued those things which were spoken, but certaine beleued not.*

21 *Neither by letters.* The Priestes and Scribes did not hold their peace, because they were become more gentle towarde Paule, or to the end they might spare him: that proceeded rather of cōtenipt or els of despaire: because they neither knew how to oppresse him when he was so farre from them, and his carrying into Italie was to them in steede of a graue. For they did lord it no lesse carelesly then proudly, so that no body did trouble them at home. Furthermore though the Iewes come not altogether rightly prepared to heare, yet they shewe some desire to learne, when as they doe not refuse to heare the defence of his doctriin, which is spoken against euery where. For many doe stop the way before themselves with this preiudice, because they cannot abide to hear that which is refused by common iudgement: but subscribe to the opinion of other men to the condemning of doctrine which they know not. Neuerthelesse this is not without fault (as I said) that they obect gain-saying to cause hatred, or to procure euill suspicion: as if it had not beene said before by Iſaias, that god should be a stone of offence to al the people. It is vncertaine whether vpon the day appointed Paule disputed all the day, or they reasoned one with another: saue only because we may gesse by the circumstance of time, that Paul did not continue speaking full. For he could scarce haue framed a speech which could haue continued from morning to night. Wherefore I doe not doubt but that after the Apostle had briefly expounded the summe of the gospel, he graunted libertie to the hearers to propound questions; & did make answer to the questions which wer objected to him. But we must note the state of the disputatiō which Luke saith is double. For Paul taught first: after what sort the kingdome of God was amongst them, and principally what manner chiefe felicitie and glory that was which was promised to the, which the prophets doe so highly extoll. For seeing that many of them did dreame of a fraile estate of the kingdome of God in the world, & did place the same falsly in idlenesse, pleasure, and in plentie of present good things, it was necessary that it should be rightly defined, that they might know that the kingdome of God is spirituall: whose beginning is newnesse of life, and the end thereof blessed immortalitie and the heauenly glory.

Secondy Paule exhorted them to receiue Christe the authour of the promised felicitie, And againe this second point had two members, for it could not be handled profitably and soundly, vnlesse he did expound the office of the promised redeemer: secondly vnlesse he did shewe that he is alreadie giuen, and that the sonne of Mary is he in whom the Fathers hoped. It was in deed a common *maxime* among the Iewes that the Messias should come and restore all things into perfect order. But Paul laboured another point, which was not so well knowen: that the Messias was promised, who should with the sacrifice of his death, make satisfaction for the sinnes of the world, who should reconcile GOD to men, who should purchase eternal righteousness, who should fashion me after the image of God, being regenerate with his spirit, who should finally make his faithful seruants heires with him of eternally life.

And that all those things were fulfilled in the person of Iesus Christe crucified. He could not entreat of those things, but he must needs call backe the Iewes from their grosse and earthly inuentions into heauen, and also take away the stumbling blocke of the crosse, seeing he taught that there was no other way or meanes whereby we are reconciled with God. And let vs note, that (as Luke doth testifie) Paul tooke all that which he spake of Christe out of the law and prophets. For true religion differeth from all feigned religions, because the worde of God alone is the rule thereof. Also the church of god differeth from all profane sects in this, because it heareth him speake alone, and is gouerned by his commandement.

And now by this we see the agreement that is between the olde and the newe testaments to establish the faith of Christ: secondly, that double profit of the scripture which the same Paul commendeth in another place: to wit, that it is sufficient as well to instruct those which are willing to learne, as to refute the stubbornnesse of those which set themselves against the truth. Therefore let those, who desire to be wise with sobrietie and to teach others wel, appoint themselves these bounds, that they vtter nothing but out of the pure fountaine of the worde. The philosophers deale otherwise, who contend only with reasons, because they haue no sound authority, whom the papists imitate too much who set apart the oracles of God, and leane only to the inuentions of mans braine, that is too meere folly.

24 Some beleueed. Luke declareth that this was at length the success of the disputation, that they did not all profite in the same doctrine. We know that the apostle was indued with such grace of the spirit, that he ought to haue moued stones: and yet hee could not after long disputing and testifying, winne all men vnto Christ. Wherefore let vs not maruell, if the vnbeliefe of many doe at this day resist the plaine doctrine of the Gospell, and if many remaine obstinate, to whom the truth of Christ is no lesse made manifest, then the sunne at noone day. Moreover those returne from Paul blinde & blockish, who came vnto him willingly, as if they had bin desirous to learne. If there were such stubbornnesse in voluntarie hearers, what maruell is it if those refuse Christe with a malicious minde, who swell with pride and malice, and do openly flie and hate the light.

25 And when they could not agree, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word, well spake the holy ghost by Iesaias to our fathers:

26 Saying, Goe to this people, and say, ye shall heare with your eares and not vnderstande: and seeing yee shall see, and not perceiue.

27 For the hearte of this people is waxed grosse, and their eares are dull with hearing, and with their eyes they haue winked: least at any time they see with their eyes and heare with their eares, and vnderstand with their heart, & they be conuerted and I heale them.

28 Bee it knowne therefore vnto you, that this saluation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they shall heare it.

- 29 And when he had said these things, the Jewes went out from him and had great reasoning among themselves.
- 30 And Paul remained two yeeres full in a thing hee had hired for himself, & he receiued all those which came in vnto him.
- 31 Preaching the kingdome of God, and teaching those things which concerne the Lord Iesus, with all boldnesse, and no man did les him.

25 And when they could not. The malice and frowardnesse of the vnfaithfull is the cause of this, that Christ who is our peace and the on-ly bond of holy vnitie, is an occasion of dissention, and doth cause those to goe together by the eares, who were friends before. For behold whē the Jewes come together to heare Paul, they thinke all one thing and speake all one thing: they doe all professe that they embrace the law of Moses. So soone as they heare the doctrine of reconciliation, there ariseth dissentiō among thē, so that they are diuided. And yet for al this we must not think that the preaching of the Gospel is the cause of discord: but that priue displeasure which lurked before in their malicious minds, doth then breake out: and as the brightnesse of the sunne doth not colour things otherwise then they were: but doth plainly shew the difference, which was none so long as it was dark. Therefore seeing God doth illuminate his elect peculiarly, and faith is not common to all men, let vs remember that it cannot be but that so soone as Christe commeth abroad, there will be a diuisiō among men. But thē let vs cal to mind that which Simon foretold of him, that he shall be a signe which shall be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be disclosed: & that vnbeleef which striueth against God, is the mother of dissention. Luc. 2. 34. 35.

After that Paul. At the first hee went about to allure them meeke-ly and gently, now so soon as he espieth their obstinacie, he inueigheth sharply, & doth seuerely denounce the iudgement of God: for the rebellious must be handeled thus, whose pride cannot bee tamed with plaine doctrine. The same order must wee keep, wee must gently gouerne those who are apt to be taught & gentle: but we must cite the stubborne vnto Gods iudgement seat. Whereas hee bringeth in rather the holy Ghost speaking, thē the prophet, it maketh to the credite of the oracle. For seeing God requireth that he alone bee heard, doctrine cannot otherwise be of authoritie; then if we know that it did proceed from him, and that it did not issue out of mans braine. Againe, hee declareth therewithall that the stubbornesse of one age only, is not there noted, but that the oracle of the spirit is extended vnto the time to come.

Go to this people. This is a notable place, because it is cited sixe times in the new Testament: but because it is brought in els where to an other end, wee must marke for what purpose Paul applyeth it vnto the present cause. Namely, hee meant with this as with a mallet to beat in peeces the hardnesse and frowardnesse of the wicked: and to encourage the faithfull who were as yet weak and tender, least the vnbeleefe of others should trouble them. Mat. 13. 14.
Ioh. 12. 40.
Rom. 11. 8.
Mark. 4. 12.
Luk. 8. 10.

Therefore the sum is, that that was fulfilled which was foretold by the

prophet : & that therefore there is no cause why the reprobate should flatter themselves, or that the faithfull should be terrified as it wer with som new and vnwonted thing. And though it be certain that this blindness whereof the prophet spake, began in his time : yet Iohn sheweth that it did properly appertaine vnto the kingdome of Christ. Therefore Paul doth fitly applie it vnto that contempt of the Gospel which hee saw as if he should haue said: this is the very same thing which the holy ghost foretold in times past by the mouth of Iſaias. And though this place be diuinely applyed not only by the Euangelists, but also by Paul himselfe, the shewe of contrarietie is easily put away and answered. Matthew, Marke, and Luke say that this prophesie was fulfilled, when Christ spake by parables vnto the people, and did not reueale to them the mysteries of the kingdome of heauen. For then the vnfaithful hard the voice of God with their outward eares, but they did not profit thereby. Iohn saith in a sense not much vnlike to this, that the Iewes wer not brought to belecue, no not with many myracles, so that this same prophesie of the prophet was fulfilled. Therefore these foure agree in this, that it came to passe by the iust iudgement of God, that the reprobate in hearing should not heare, and in seeing should not see. Nowe Paul calleth to minde that which the prophete did testifie concerning the Iewes, least any man wonder at their blindness. Furthermore, in the Epistle to the Romanes, hee mounteth higher, shewing that this is the cause of blindness, because God doth giue the light of faith only to the remnant whom he hath chosen freely. And surely it is certaine that because the reprobate reiect the doctrine of saluation, this cometh to passe through their owne malice, and that therefore they themselves are to be blamed. But this next cause doth not let but that the secrete electio of god may distinguish between men: that those may beleue who are ordeined to life, and that the other may remaine blockish. I will not stand long about the wordes of the prophet, because I haue expounded the same elswhere. Neither did Paul curiously recite the wordes which are in the prophet, but did rather apply his wordes vnto his purpose. Therefore he imputeth that making blinde, which the prophet attributeth to the secrete iudgement of God to their malice. For the prophet is commaunded to stop the eyes of his hearers: and Paul in this place accuseth the vnbeleuing of his time, because they shut their own eyes. Though he setteth downe both thinges distinctly, that God is the author of their blindness, and that yet notwithstanding they shut their owne eyes and become blinde of their owne accorde: as these two thinges doe very well agree together, as we saide elswhere. In the last member where it is said, Least they see with their eyes, or heare with their eares, or vnderstand with their heart: God sheweth howe cleare his doctrine is: to wit, that it is sufficient to lighten all the senses, vnlesse men doe maliciously darken them selues: as Paul also teacheth in another place, that his Gospel is plaine so that none can be blinde in the light thereof, saue those who are ordainyd to destruction, whose eyes Satan hath blinded.

Least they be converted and I heale them. By this we gather that the word of God is not set before all men that they may returne to soundnesse of minde: but that the externall voice soundeth in the eares of manie without the effectual working of the Spirit, only that they may be made inexcusable. And here the pride of flesh doeth rashly murmure against God: as we see many object, that men are called in vaine, yea absurdly, vnlesse it be in their power to obey: for though we see no reason why god appeareth to the blinde, and speaketh to the deafe: yet his will alone which is the rule of all rightcousnesse, ought to bee to vs in steed of a thousand reasons. In the conclusion wee must note the wholesome effect of the word of God: namely the conuersion of men: which is not onlie the beginning of health: but also a certaine resurrection from death to life.

28. *Therefore be it.* Least the Iewes may afterward accuse him of reuolting, because hee forsaketh the holy stock of Abraham and goeth to the prophane Gentiles: he denounceth that which the Prophets did so often refuse, that The saluation whereof they were the proper, at least the principall heires, should be translated vnto strangers. Notwithstanding whereas he saith that saluation was sent to the Gentiles: he meaneth, in the second place: to wit, after that the Iewes had reiectedit, as we haue said before more at large. Therefore the sense is, that there is no cause why the Iewes should complaine, if the Gentiles be admitted into the void possession after that they haue forsaken it. Neither doth he make faith common to all the Gentiles in generall, when hee saith that they shall heare. For he had full well tried, that euen many of the Gentiles did wickedly resist God: but he stretcheth so many of the Gentiles as beleueed, against the vnbeleeuing Iewes, that he may prouoke them vnto ialousie: as it is in the song of Moses. In the meane season he signifieth that the doctrine which they refuse shall profit others.

29 *Hauiug much reasoning.* No doubt the wicked were more neeled because he cited the Prophetic against them: for they are so farre from waxing meeke when they are reprovied, that they are more inflamed with fury. This is the reason why they reasoned when they were gone out from Paul, because the more part would not be quiet. But seeing there was such disputing: it appeareth that some did so embrace those things which Paul had spoken, that they doubted not to defend and stoutly to auouch that which they beleueed. But it is in vaine for any man to object thereupon, that the Gospell of Christ is the seede of contention, which commeth vndoubtedly from mans pride and waywardnesse: and assuredly if we will haue peace with God, wee must striue against those which contemne him.

30 *He receiued al.* The Apostle shewed an excellent example of constancie, in that hee offered himselfe so willingly to all those which were desirous to heare him. Surely hee was not ignorant what great hatred he did purchase: and that this was his best way, if by holding his peace hee might appease the hatred of his aduersaries. For a man being desirous to prouide for himselfe alone, woulde not haue done thus: but be-

cause he remembred that he was no lesse the seruāt of Christ & a preacher of the Gospell when he was in prison, then if he had bin at libertie; he thoght it was not lawfull for him to withdraw himselfe frō any which was readieto learn, least he should foreflow the occasion which was offered him by God, and therefore he did more regarde the holie calling of God then his owne life. And that we may knowe that he did incurre daunger willingly, Luke doth shortly after expressly commend his boldnes: as if he shuld say that setting al feare aside he did faithfully obey the commandement of God, neither was he terrified with any daunger, but did proceed to take paines with whomsoever he met.

Preaching the kingdom of God. He doth not seperate the kingdōe of God and those things which belong to Christ as diuers things, but doth rather adde the second thing by way of exposition, that we may know that the kingdome of God is groundēd and containēd in the knowledge of the redēption purchased by Christ. Therefore paul taught, that men are strangers & forrayners frō the kingdom of God vntill hauing their sins done away they be reconciled to God, & renewed into holines of life by the spirit: and that the kingdom of God is then erected and doth then flourish among them, when Christ the mediator doth ioynē them to the father, hauing both their sinnes freely forgiven them, and being also regenerate vnto righteousness, that beginning the heauchenly life vpon earth they may alwayes haue a longing desire to come to heauen, where they shall fullie and perfectly enioy glorie. Also Luke setteth foorth a singular benifit of God in that Paul had so great libertie graunted him. For that came not to passe through the winking and dissimulation of those who could hinder it, seeing they did detest religion: but because the Lord did shut their eyes. Wherefore it is not without cause that paul himselfe doth boast, that the worde of God was not boundē with his bondes,

Tim. 2.9

The ende of the latter parte of the commentaries

vpon the Acts of the Apostles.

All glorie to God.

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